

INQUEST

D—No. 8.

AT

W A N G A N U I.

No. 1.

THE CORONER, WANGANUI, TO THE HON. THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL.

Wanganui, 18th July, 1862.

SIR,—I have the honor to forward herewith the Depositions and Inquisition in the case of an Inquest held by me upon the body of an Aboriginal Native who was killed on Monday last by a settler named William Lister.

You will doubtless ere this have heard of this case and its probable termination, but as it might have involved very serious consequences, and you may wish to have the fullest information at once, I have thought it my duty to forward the papers direct to yourself at Wellington, instead of sending them as usual to your office at Auckland.

Believing that there was a necessity for immediate action in the matter, to prevent by an open enquiry the spread of erroneous statements by which the Native mind might be inflamed, as well as to meet the Public wish, I determined to hold an Inquest with the least possible delay, and consequently I summoned a Jury partly from the Town, and proceeded to Major Cooper's house about eight miles up the River, he kindly allowing me to hold the Inquest there. I was accompanied by Mr. R. W. Woon, the Native Interpreter, who most willingly attended me, and rendered the most essential service, the Natives having very great confidence in him.

There was a large concourse of Natives, to whom I explained the nature of the enquiry, and that it would be open to them to put any questions they might think proper—that the enquiry was usual amongst the white population, and would tend to a full understanding by all parties how the unfortunate death had occurred.

I am happy to say, I never saw any number of Natives assembled upon any Judicial proceedings who were so orderly, quiet, and attentive, evincing as they did at the same time deep interest in the matter: they were told that all the proceedings would be stated in Maori for the information of those present, which was done by Mr. Woon much to their satisfaction; and upon leaving to return to Town; it was not without their unanimous declaration that the proceedings were fair, open, and proper, and that they attached no blame to Lister.

Lister was, at his own wish, examined at the Hospital, where he still lies, and his evidence read to those assembled at the adjourned meeting at Wanganui, many of whom were from the Wangahū, where the deceased's friends live, and they also in the same manner expressed their entire satisfaction and approved of the course taken, and their feeling that the deceased had brought on his own death from his improper conduct.

The great anxiety of the Natives seemed to be the removal from the mind of the white people any idea that there was a premeditated hostile attack in any wise sanctioned by themselves.

Many questions might arise upon this Inquest, but I believe the object in view having been so fairly attained I need not advert to them, except by saying, that surrounded as I was by difficulties of every kind, I could only act as I have.

I have, &c.

H. Ross,
Coroner.

Enclosure 1, in No. 1.

District of Wanganui, }
Province of Wellington, }
in New Zealand, to Wit. }

Inquisition taken for our Sovereign Lady the Queen at the House of Isaac Rhodes Cooper, on the Right Bank of the Wanganui River, in the Wanganui District, and within the jurisdiction aforesaid, on the sixteenth day of July, in the Twenty-sixth year of the Reign of our Sove-