

indeed, making "pigs" of them. He would endure this state of things no longer. He had sounded the tribe, and found them all of one mind—all determined to assert their rights at whatever risk. He had waited for a public opportunity of warning the Superintendent not to provoke the tribe to extreme measures. The opportunity had now come. In the presence, therefore, of the assembled tribe, and in the hearing of his brother chiefs, he called upon His Honor to "deliver the rents from prison." The runholders would not pay without his consent. If, therefore, His Honor refused to give this consent, they would take the law into their own hands, and would convince the tribes that they were something better than "pigs." They would at once drive off the sheep and cattle. They would seize some in payment of back rent, and would drive off the rest. This was no idle threat. The tribe had all agreed to this, and were prepared for the consequences. They must have a final answer from His Honor at once. Unless the rents were immediately promised, at daylight on the morrow they would execute their threats. He concluded by calling on the meeting to express their views on the several points he had raised.

Aperahama Te Huruhuru spoke next. He expressed his entire approval of all that had fallen from Wiremu Pukapuka, and declared his intention to seize or drive off the stock unless the rents were immediately paid.

Several other Ngatiraukawa men spoke to the same effect, and were followed by

Wiriharai (of the Ngatikauhata) from Oroua. He was not only opposed to the impounding of the rents, but was also averse to the sale of the block. He had never consented to the sale, and never would consent. He was still a kingite. [Wi Pukapuka here interrupted him: "Don't use that name in this meeting. What have we to do with kingism?"] Apart from his kingism he was opposed to the sale of the land to Pakehas.

Tohutohu (of Oroua) spoke next. He had not yet, he said, consented to the proposed sale. He wanted to receive the back rent. After they had received the rents and spent all the money, they would perhaps be disposed to talk about the sale.

Tapa Te Whata, Te Kooro, Nepia Maukeringutu, Tamihana Whareakaka, and several others then addressed the Superintendent, urging His Honor to withdraw the restrictions in regard to payment of arrears of rent, and promising to make such a division of the money between the contending tribes as would effectually prevent a renewal of hostilities.

His Honor replied at some length. He referred to the early history of the Rangitikei dispute. He sketched the course of events from the time when, at the request of the Government, he came up to prevent, if possible, an armed collision of parties. He reminded them of what had taken place at the several meetings between himself and the leading chiefs, and of the final agreement they had come to at the Wharangi meeting in October, 1864. He requested them distinctly to bear in mind that the proposal for the sale of the block came in the first instance from the Natives and not from the Commissioner; that on separate occasions the land was offered to him by the several tribes claiming it, as their only means of settling the quarrel; and that he ultimately, in the name of the Queen, accepted that offer, subject to future terms to be mutually agreed upon. He came up originally not to treat for the land, but to propose an arbitration of title, and to prevent the effusion of blood between the contending tribes. At the Tauhirihoe meeting, and again at the Ngatiapa meeting, he pressed this plan of a committee upon the Runanga, but without success. He made no attempt to induce the Natives to surrender their disputed claims to the Crown; he said not one word to them about the sale of the land. He simply endeavoured to adjust an angry dispute which threatened to embroil the district in an intertribal war, and he suggested to them a plan the object of which was not to alienate but to secure to each tribe its fair share of the land. His plan was rejected by the Ngatiapa, who of their own accord offered the land in absolute sale to the Crown. As this offer virtually amounted to a pledge that the tribe would not assert their rights by force of arms, or continue any longer to threaten the peace of the district, he felt bound to accept it; but in doing so he was careful to explain to them that he did not accept the land, but such right or interest as they might hereafter be proved to have in the land. By doing this he disarmed the Ngatiapa, and put an end to the threatened collision. He did not, however, take advantage of this arrangement to force either party to terms. He simply explained to the Ngatiraukawa and Rangitane, at Ihakara's Pa, what he had done, warned them against disturbing the peace of the district, and proposed the withholding of all rents till some amicable arrangement had been mutually come to. This proposal was readily agreed to, and from that time to the present all parties had adhered faithfully to the compact. To this he attributed in a great measure the peace on this coast. Wi Pukapuka, Aperahama, Tapa, and other chiefs had now asked him to withdraw the restriction, and to allow the rents to be paid. They had expressed their conviction that it would not be attended with evil consequences, as the three tribes would now agree to an equitable division of the money; and in support of this opinion they had instanced the case of a settler who had recently paid £500 for the right of cutting timber on the disputed block, which sum had been amicably distributed between the contending claimants. With regard to this case, he would simply say that any settler who had dared to violate the existing arrangement would be held liable for all the consequences of such an Act. As to the danger or otherwise of allowing the rents to be paid, that was quite a matter of speculation. The meeting had expressed a very decided opinion that no harm would result from it; there were others who confidently believed that the removal of the restrictions would lead directly to a renewal of the contest. They might be right in their view, but he would remind them that formerly, while the dispute was dormant, the rents were paid, and the tribes divided them without coming to any open issue. The disaffection, however, gradually deepened, and the old chief Nepia, who was shrewd and far-seeing, was so confident of an approaching rupture between the tribes, that shortly before his death he sent for the Ngatiapa, and, with a speech worthy a good and generous chief, handed over to their leading men his own share of the rents, exhorting them at the same time to cultivate friendly relations with the Ngatiraukawa after his death; and those at the meeting who were present on that occasion—who saw the dying chief perform this graceful and honourable act, and who also saw the Ngatiapa grasp at and carry away the money—must have then felt that the approaching death of Nepia would solve a tie that had long kept the tribes in check, and that ere many months after his departure the smouldering feelings of discontent and jealousy would