

In four hours and a half an expedition can come out on the river bank about half a mile above Taheuroa *via* Thurou (Tito's old camp), and an expedition would reach the lower settlement of Taheuroa *via* Kotaika in three hours and a half; and so an enemy in this important settlement might be attacked in front and rear simultaneously, if necessary, while he would be quite open to attack from the left bank also.

T. KELLS, Captain,
Wanganui Veteran Volunteers.

No. 38.

Copy of a Letter from Lieut.-Colonel LYON to the Hon. Colonel HAULTAIN.

(No. 19.)

SIR,—

Patea, 7th May, 1869.

I have the honor to state that I left this post on Monday morning, 3rd inst., at 9 a.m., force as per margin,* for the purpose of exploring the Patea River. I succeeded in procuring five canoes, though not very good, just capable of carrying six days' provisions—the force, in addition, having two days' served out. I crossed the Patea River at Hukatere, and marched to Otauto, at which place a halt was made.

Fresh tracks having been seen, I sent out a scouting party of No. 9 Division A.C. (Ngatiporou), led by Hatiwhera. A short time afterwards I received the information that two Hauhaus had been shot. On making inquiries, I learnt that the scouts came suddenly upon three Hauhaus in an open fern flat. They dodged each other for some time, and when two out of the three were almost surrounded by the scouts, Hatiwhera stepped out, and walked up to the Hauhaus with his gun reversed; they did likewise. On being disarmed—one of a breech-loading carbine and revolver, the other of a double-barrelled gun—they put the question, "Where is Kemp?" The reply was, "We have nothing to do with Kemp, we are Ngatiporous;" on hearing which one of them said, "If this is so there is no chance for us;" and such was the case, for they were immediately shot. The third had succeeded in escaping into the bush.

Not being able to find any track down to the river from Otauto, I became anxious about the canoes, but about 4 p.m. Mr. Booth, R.M., who had kindly volunteered to take charge of them, came up, informing me they were about two miles and a half higher up the river. I sent a message to the scouts to camp in the bush for the night, and marched with the rest of the force to the bank of the river, the canoes being alongside, and bivouacked there for the night.

Early next morning a report was brought in that one of the scouts, Horera by name, having fallen in with fresh tracks, followed them, and came upon two Natives, both of whom he shot. One was Te Iraia, chief of the Pakakohe Tribe, the other proved to be a woman dressed like a man, viz., a mat round the loins, and shirt, and when called upon to stand refused to do so, and was shot whilst running away. Another party of scouts saw about forty Hauhaus, twenty of whom escaped by canoes, the remainder scattered in different directions in the bush.

I marched at 7.30, taking an inland track, the canoes being sent on a short time previously, with orders to stop at the first clearing and communicate with me. I had not marched above three or four hundred yards when I learnt that two of the canoes had upset, in attempting to pass an eel-weir. I returned to the bank of the river, and after three hours' work the canoes were righted.

From the great height of the banks and dense bush down to the water's edge, I came to the conclusion it would be impossible to communicate with the canoes on my march inland, so ordered the provisions to be put on shore, leaving them in charge of an officer and twenty men, having issued two more days' ration to the force. By this time it was past noon. With the Ngatiporous in advance, I followed a bush track for about two miles, and came on to a large fern flat, where I saw the two Natives that had been shot the day previous, and recognised them as two who had formerly lived at Taumaha, near Manutahi. Struck again into the bush, following a badly-defined track, which evidently led in the direction parallel to the river. The path, if such it can be called, and which none but very intelligent Native bushmen could have found, was very harassing to the men, being intersected with supplejack and other undergrowth. After about six miles of this kind of work, and evening coming on, I halted near a stream, and bivouacked for the night. After dark fires were allowed to be lighted, and the men made themselves as comfortable as a most dreary damp bush and a soaking wet night would allow them. Breakfasted before daylight, and marched at 7 a.m.; about noon began to descend into the gorge of the Patea River, which runs about a thousand feet below; about half-way down arrived at a clearing, on a piece of flat land, and from thence could see signs of cultivation on the opposite (right) bank, and therefore concluded was in the vicinity of a settlement. Continuing the descent, reached another flat, and from thence sent out scouts; following them up, arrived at a deserted village, and found that the Hauhaus had escaped by canoes up the river. No signs of any tracks whatever could be found on either bank of the river by which a force could have marched. I remained there for the night, and was obliged reluctantly to return, after burning the village.

I believe firmly, from reports of scouts and my own observation, that the only means of further progress up this river is by canoes. From a letter picked up in a whare, I found that the name of the village was Omaruika; by the bush track, I consider it about twenty miles from Patea.

I marched at daylight, and arrived in camp at 4 p.m. The men in good heart. The Ngatiporou danced a war dance on their arrival, the men giving them three cheers.

* No. 6 Division A.C.:—1 Sub-Inspector; 1 Acting Sub-Inspector; 2 Sergeants; 51 Rank and File: 55. No. 9 A.C. (Ngatiporou):—3 Native Officers; 1 Acting Sub-Inspector; 3 Sergeants; 63 Rank and File: 70. Wairou Rifles:—1 Captain; 1 Subaltern; 2 Sergeants; 21 Rank and File: 25. Carlyle Rifles:—1 Subaltern; 2 Sergeants; 26 Rank and File: 29. Total, 179.