

THE NATIVE MINISTER'S INTERVIEW WITH THE LEADING WAIKATO CHIEFS.

THE Honorable Mr. McLean, Native Minister, having received an intimation that Rewi Maniapoto and Tamati Ngapora had expressed a wish to meet him, it was considered a favourable opportunity for breaking through that rigid exclusiveness which had for a series of years been maintained towards the Government by the so-called Maori King party. With this view, therefore, Mr. McLean left for Waikato on the afternoon of the 2nd November, and reached Alexandra on the night of the 4th. Here he met the Chief Ahipene Kaihau, then returning from a visit to Tokangamutu, Tawhiao's residence. Ahipene did not give a very satisfactory account of the state of matters at that place, and discouraged Mr. McLean's proceeding further.

On the 6th (Saturday), the party reached Otorohanga, the residence of Mr. Lewis Hettit, one of the points of "Aukati," of which so much has been said and written, and the crossing of which, was strictly prohibited under the severest penalties.

Soon after Mr. McLean's arrival, Wiremu Te Pukapuka, a Ngatimaniapoto chief, who has rendered the Government considerable assistance, came in with a message from the chiefs of Tokangamutu on the 7th (Sunday). This was followed by a letter from Rewi (now known by the Natives of the surrounding district as Manga), of which the following is a translation:—

"To Mr. McLEAN,—

"Te Kuiti, 7th November, 1869.

"To-morrow I shall go thither to see you. This is a settled determination (of mine).
"From MANGA."

On the 8th, neither Rewi nor any of the Tokangamutu chiefs put in an appearance, owing to differences amongst themselves as to the place of meeting; one section proposing it should be at Tokangamutu, and the other at the Uira.

At length it was decided to hold it at a place called Pahiko, and Mr. McLean received the following note:—

"To Mr. McLEAN,—

"Pahiko, November 2 (?), 1869.

"If you are at Otorohanga, do you come here. I am here.

"From MANUHIRI to you."

To this Mr. McLean replied—

"November 8th, 1869.

"It is well. I will go, but it is late to-day. To-morrow I will be there.

"From your friend,

"To Manuhiri, at Pahiko.

"McLEAN."

On the following day (9th November), accordingly, Mr. McLean, with Lieut.-Colonel Fraser, Mr. Searancke, Messrs. Maning and Brown, Ahipene Kaihau, and others of his party, accompanied by Mr. Lewis Hettit and his sons, Mr. Turner, Wiremu Te Pukapuka, and several other Natives, set out for Pahiko.

As they approached the settlement, the women called out their words of welcome, and made the customary demonstrations accorded to visitors. There were about two hundred natives present, including many of the leading chiefs of Waikato, Maniapoto, as well as men of importance from other neighbouring tribes, as may be seen by the following list:—

Names of the Principal Chiefs who were present at the Meeting at Pahiko.

Manuhiri,	Reihana,	Te Karekare,
Rewi Maniapoto,	Takerei Te Rau,	Ngatapa,
Taonui,	Raureti,	Aporo,
Hauauru,	Te Whiti,	Te Retimana,
Tarahawaiki,	Hunia Te Ngakau,	Te Rapihana Rangiwheha.
Tuhoro,	Takiwaru,	

As Mr. McLean approached the tent erected for his use, the assembled Natives stood up, which was suitably acknowledged. The Natives collected in front of the house occupied by the chiefs, and offered up prayers according to the Hauhau form. The principal men joined in this act of worship with much apparent devotion. After prayers were over, Manuhiri (Tamati Ngapora) came forward and shook hands cordially with Mr. McLean, as did also several of the leading chiefs. Food was then placed before the visitors.

After the meal was concluded, and a considerable time having elapsed without any one coming forward to speak in accordance with their usual custom, Mr. McLean moved to the front of the house where the chief men were seated, and addressed the Chiefs in the following terms:—

"I have for some time been waiting to hear the usual words of salutation to the stranger; but as I am given to understand you wish to depart from your custom, and desire that I should speak first on this occasion, I will do so.