

“The originators of the meeting, Ngatitaha and Ngatiwhaoa, opened the proceedings by reading a paper to the assembled tribes, numbering in all about 600 persons, consisting of Ngatiwhaoa, Ngatitahu, Ngatimanawa, Te Urewera, Ngatihineuru, Ngatitutewha, Ngatituwharetoa, Ngatiwhakaue, Ngatirangitahi, Ngatihinewai, Ngatiraukawa, Ngatituara, and Tuhourangi, under the leadership of its Putaiki or Council of Twelve. The land policy of the Government was keenly argued before one of its representatives, and notwithstanding the audacity of Tuhourangi in proclaiming itself the sole dictator of the proceedings, its pretentious assumptions were at once repudiated by the confederate tribes in the following terms:—‘Who has constituted you an authority to dictate to us as to what we shall do respecting our land matters? We refuse to acknowledge your pretensions in any way, and here let your interference in our land matters cease.’

“Notwithstanding the fierce opposition to all general measures in the district by the Tuhourangis, the twelve confederate tribes declared for the Government, affirming their determination to keep inviolable all their bargains, and to facilitate in every possible way the settlement of the lands in the Arawa country; adding, with emphatic outspokenness, the land agents of the Government have acted throughout the negotiations in an open straightforward manner. After four days’ continuous discussion the meeting was brought to a conclusion, the anti-selling Tuhourangi tribe retiring completely crestfallen to its home at the Wairoa, threatening to convene another monster meeting to defend itself, which meeting is still in abeyance.”

In the month of April various matters of minor importance commanded our attention, and we deemed it advisable to transmit to you a general report, which, in order to connect a continuous narrative of our operations, should be embodied here, but unfortunately the copy of the report in question has been mislaid, owing to which act of carelessness, allow us to refer you to the original already in your hands.

In May we proceeded to Whakatane, Kokohinau, Te Teko, Te Umuhika, and Te Matata; at the latter place we held a series of meetings with Ngatirangitahi on land affairs, and procured the necessary signatures to the final lease of Tawhitinui and Otuhangu, known as lots Nos. 31 and 39, Parish of Matata.

At a Native settlement named Te Umuhika, six miles from Te Awa-o-te-Atua, upwards of 300 persons presented themselves, the occasion being what the Natives term “*he hui*,” or gathering. We took advantage of this tribal meeting, in which the Ngatiawa, Te Uriwera, and the Arawas were largely represented, and placed before the assembled through the long-pending dispute regarding the ownership of certain lands in the Pokohu Block, at Rangitaiki, leased by us previously. After explanatory speeches by us, and selecting nine or ten of the most intelligent Native chiefs and assessors to serve as a jury, the various points in dispute were submitted to the multitude, allowing each tribe to conduct its own business as it seemed fit. No attempt on our part was made to interfere with the discussions, nor impediment placed in the way of any person who desired to speak; and after the subjects, one by one, were thoroughly exhausted, and the audience had no further desire to continue the examination, we withdrew with our ten jurymen to settle the decision, refraining to give any opinion till after the chiefs and assessors had concluded their remarks, and to our surprise and great satisfaction the views held by the jury of ten coincided precisely with those held by ourselves; and we found that the opinions held by ourselves and the jurymen on the disputed points were indorsed by the large audience generally. This mode of investigating title to Maori land has called forth the plaudits of the tribes in the Bay of Plenty and Lake Districts, the leading chiefs having expressed their entire confidence in the course adopted by us in this respect; and it would seem, from various communications received, that the result is bringing about almost universal satisfaction. The owners of the Puke Block, the survey of which engendered hostile feeling and a rise to arms, desire that an investigation regarding Te Puke, similar to that held at the Umuhika, should be accorded by the Government, as will be seen by the following document transmitted by the Waitaha tribes to the Hon. the Native Minister:—

[TRANSLATION.]

To Sir DONALD McLEAN.

Father, Salutations!—

Te Awahou, Rotorua, 6th June, 1876.

This is a prayer by us, the tribe of Waitaha, to you regarding our land, Te Puke, that there may be an inquiry, a similar investigation to that held by Mr. C. O. Davis at Te Umuhika. That inquiry was most excellent and very clear; let the same mode of inquiry be introduced into our district. We do not approve of the Native Lands Court, nor do we approve of the investigation which took place at Horo Horo; but our wish is that the inquiry be clear on the side of the Pakeha, and clear on the side of the Maori, so that the confused state of things in which our land is involved may be managed. Do you signify your approval that Mr. C. O. Davis be the director of this mode of inquiry. Sufficient.

By the whole of the committee of Waitaha.

Na Ereataa Taramaoa.
Na Hakaria Tipene.
Na Hoani Ngahao.
Na Hirini Haimona.
Na Ngapea.
Na Te Whetu.
Na Ratana Tekapaiwaho.
Na Hotene Terata.

The following is extracted from a paper drawn up by Pererika Ngahuruhuru on the same subject:—

[TRANSLATION.]

The tribes that met at Whakatane on the 9th of May, 1876, were the Nagatiawa, the Ngatipukeko, the Patuai, the Urewera, and the Arawa, where discussion commenced regarding the Pokohu [a block