

accompanied by two constables, proceeded to the scene of action, and after some talk succeeded in getting the men they wanted to give themselves up and come into Hamilton. They were bailed out until the case came on for hearing, when, strange to say, the charge against them was withdrawn, and the engineer for the railway (Mr. Stewart), acting, I presume, on behalf of the Rotorua Railway Company, gave a dinner at which the offending Natives, the contractor, the engineer, and others were present. The engineer made a speech in which he admitted that there were errors and faults on both sides, and the whole affair ended apparently in a good feeling being established between the contending parties. The reason of the trouble is, I understand, because the Natives will not accept a reasonable sum that the company are prepared to give them for a portion of their land that has been taken for the railway. The Natives, on the other hand, demand an exorbitant price, which the company refuse to give, and the Natives will not take the initiative in having the matter referred to arbitration.

During the early part of November the Hon. Mr. Ballance visited Alexandra, and met Wahanui and other members of the Ngatimaniapoto Tribe, also some representative chiefs from Kawhia. A large meeting of Ngatimaniapoto was being held at that time at Te Kuiti, some thirty miles south of Alexandra, and it was hoped by the Natives that Mr. Ballance would meet them there; but the short time at his disposal, and the roughness of the road or track between Alexandra and Te Kuiti, precluded him from doing so. A considerable amount of business in connection with the North Island Trunk Railway, roads, surveys, and other matters was, however, done with Wahanui and Mr. John Ormsby (half-caste, and chairman of Kawhia Native Committee), those two practically representing the Ngatimaniapoto people.

It was also during the month of November that the Natives at Whatiwhatihoe started what they called a "King Committee" in opposition to the Kawhia Native Committee, which consists of members most of whom have nothing in common with the King party, and who were duly elected in accordance with "The Native Committees Act, 1883," the King Committee being a Committee nominated (not elected) by and from amongst the supporters of the King party. Of course they had no other standing than that which the mana or power of Tawhiao—now but a shadow of what it once was—could give them. That, however, did not cause them to have any the less idea of their own importance, and they did not hesitate at issuing summonses to Natives to appear before them who belonged to "the other side," and who would have nothing to do with them because they were not elected from amongst the people, and were not working in accordance with law. In one case they went so far as to arrest and forcibly bring before them a half-caste of Ngatimaniapoto, living at Kopua, who refused to acknowledge their jurisdiction. They only acted in that way once, however, and refrained from doing so any more, as they were given to understand that Ngatimaniapoto would look upon any further action of that sort on their part as a menace against the whole tribe, and would treat it accordingly. This policy of the King party in setting up Committees was not only carried out at Whatiwhatihoe, but also at Kawhia, Aotea, Thames, Ohinemuri, Piako, and other places where Tawhiao had any supporters; and they have caused in some cases considerable trouble, especially at Aotea—where for a time they stopped the repairing of the road across the harbour—and also at Ohinemuri, where the Ngatihako Tribe only a few weeks ago stopped the survey of the Paeroa-Te Aroha Railway line.

Fortunately, whilst the supporters of the King party were plotting and acting to embarrass the Government in every possible way, the Ngatimaniapoto and Ngatihikairo (of Kawhia) were doing all they could to assist and strengthen the Government's hands. At a meeting of the Kawhia Native Committee, held in October and continued in December, a number of matters were dealt with that tended towards the opening-up of the King country for settlement. A scale of prices was fixed for different classes of timber, a considerable quantity of which was then and is now being used by railway and other contractors. Arrangements were also made for granting by the Committee of temporary occupation-leases to contractors and storekeepers who wished to live in their district. These and other matters were settled by the Committee at that time; but the most important of all the subjects dealt with and disposed of by them was the agreeing to throw open the whole of the King country for gold-prospecting under certain conditions. As soon as I was made aware that the Committee had taken this step, I at once communicated with Government and with the chairman of the Committee (Mr. Ormsby, to whose intelligence, patience, and perseverance the credit of bringing about the desired end is due), with the idea of losing no time in taking advantage of what was likely to be, if well and quickly worked out, an important matter, not only for this district, but—should a payable goldfield have been discovered—for the colony at large. Having received instructions from you to carry out the matter at my own discretion, I at once commenced negotiations with the Committee, who expressed a wish that, before the country should be overrun with any one and every one who chose to rush there under the name of prospectors, I should find them twelve men who were *bonâ fide* and qualified prospectors, and who were sober and respectable withal, for the purpose of testing the country for gold and other minerals. This I engaged to do, and, in order to get the proper persons so that the country might be fairly tested, I thought it best to ask the Warden of Thames Goldfield (Mr. Kenrick) to nominate the number of suitable men required, as I felt sure he would know of such people amongst the large mining community at the Thames. This he did, and he also came here and assisted me, with his extensive knowledge of goldfield laws and regulations, to explain the matter in all its bearings to the Native Committee, and to put things in train for the speedy opening of the district as a goldfield, should it be found necessary to do so. The country