

1886.  
NEW ZEALAND.

NOTES OF AN INQUIRY MADE BY HON. NATIVE MINISTER AT  
KIHIKIHI, ON DECEMBER 19, 1883.

*Laid on the Table by leave of the House.*

PRESENT: Hon. Mr. Bryce, Mr. Lewis (Under-Secretary), Mr. Butler, and Mr. Wilkinson,  
Rewi, Wahanui, Taonui, and Ngatai.

*Hon. Mr. Bryce:* I want to state to those present that I am making an inquiry now for the satisfaction of the Government under the Amnesty Act. That Act in reference to pardon was to be general or exceptional, according as the Government believed to be right, and it was to apply to offences in the words of the Act more or less of a political character. The Government, after mature consideration, determined that the amnesty should be general, and that there should be no exceptions. The only question remaining, then, is the political or non-political character of the offence; and it is with a view of determining this question in the case of the murder of Moffatt that I propose to put some questions to Ngatai. I ask him to reply frankly to my questions, and I promise that his replies will not lead him into trouble—they may do the opposite: what I mean is that his replies will not be used in evidence against him. I shall want to take the evidence of others also, and shall not repeat this statement to those who have heard it, but I want it to be understood that what I now say applies in every case.

1. *Hon. Mr. Bryce*. Your name is Ngatai?—Yes.
2. Your tribe?—Ngatihaua.
3. Were you ever acquainted with the European named Moffatt?—Yes.
4. Do you remember the time of his death?—Yes.
5. Do you know the date?—I forget. I have it written down in a book which is not with me.
6. Did your tribe belong to a political association known amongst the Europeans as the King movement?—Yes.
7. Was a part of the policy of that association one of isolation—that is to say, of preventing Europeans coming within certain boundaries?—That was one of our main principles.
8. Will you state the boundaries of the district in which the principles of isolation prevailed, but particularly in relation to the district where Moffatt was killed?—The boundaries commence at Utapu on the Wanganui River, thence to Moerangi, between Taupo and Tuhua.
9. At what place was Moffatt when he was killed?—At Matahauea.
10. Was that place within the boundaries of isolation that you have alluded to?—Yes.
11. Was the policy of isolation to which you have referred in full force at the time of Moffatt's murder?—Yes.
12. Was it not slackened or in abeyance?—The policy was still in force.
13. Do you know the reason for Moffatt's murder; if so, state it?—The reason he was killed was because that word had gone forth from us as King people. Land was the cause of his being killed.
14. That being the reason, what was the authority for it? What tribes were in that association?—All the tribes that joined the King movement.
15. How was the authority for the maintenance of isolation given—*i.e.*, how did you get the authority for the killing of Moffatt from those tribes?—The first instructions we received through Manga, at the commencement of the fighting. Afterwards Wahanui erected posts marking off that district to be *tapu* against Europeans; and I protected it accordingly.
16. Then, you clearly understood that this act was done in furtherance of the instructions of the tribes who formed this political association?—Yes.
17. Were you acquainted with Moffatt for some time previous to his death?—Yes.
18. Where were you acquainted with him?—I knew him when he was living with the King Natives at Te Kuiti.
19. Anywhere else?—Yes; at Ohura.
20. Was your acquaintance of long duration, and were you intimate with him?—Yes; I had known him for a long time, and we had lived as Hauhaus together: Moffatt having left the Europeans and taken refuge with us. He told us the reason he left the Europeans was on account of making powder. So we were good friends.
21. Why did Moffatt leave you?—He was arrested by the Europeans for making the powder.
22. How long was he absent on that occasion?—A year or more.
23. Was it on return from that absence that he was killed?—Yes.
24. Will you explain how it was that, not having objected to him previously, you had violent objections to his return?—The first time he came we understood his reasons, but this time he came to a place where he had no right.
25. What do you mean by the expression "he came to a place where he had no right"? Was not the place he was killed near where he had formerly resided?—The reason Moffatt was allowed in the district at first was because he made powder, but, having been arrested for that, there was no reason for his coming back again.

26. Do you mean that you no longer wished him to make powder in case it might bring trouble on you?—That was not the reason; it was a question of boundaries. Moffatt's return was after the posts had been re-erected.

27. Did you hear that Moffatt was coming up into that country some days before he came?—When he got as far as Taupo we heard of his coming.

28. Did you adopt any means to warn him of his danger?—I sent my man called Te Kati to warn him not to come, but he paid no attention to my message, and persisted in coming on.

29. Did you send or receive any written communication?—Moffatt did not send any written communication to me. I sent him a letter by my messenger telling him to return from that place as there was trouble in this district.

30. Did you write in such a way that he must have understood that the trouble you alluded to was danger to himself?—Yes; because I told him to return.

31. Was that the only warning he received?—Yes.

32. Did he receive any warning on the day of his death?—No; he was turned back on one day. He persisted in coming on the next day and was killed.

33. Was there any private malice or ill-will on the part of those who killed Moffatt, so far as you know?—There was no private malice.

34. I have seen it stated that ill-will was borne to him by your hapu because of his desertion of one of your women in favour of a woman at Manawatu. Is there any truth in that?—I have no knowledge of it.

35. I have heard it also stated that Moffatt received money belonging to the Maoris in respect of a piece of land sold; that he kept the money, and that the Maoris bore him ill-will for doing so, and killed him in consequence. I do not know anything about that.

36. Was there any ill-feeling on your part?—During the time he was in the district I had no ill-feeling against him.

37. No, but when he was out of the district?—I had no cause of ill-will against him.

38. That is all the questions I wish to ask you; if you have anything more you desire to say I will listen to you?—The questions having ceased, I have nothing further to say.

The Native Minister then questioned Wahanui as follows:—

39. *Hon. Mr. Bryce*]. Your name is Wahanui, and you are a chief of the Ngatimaniapoto tribe?—Yes.

40. You have heard the statement made by Ngatai in respect of the murder of a man named Moffatt?—Yes.

41. Is his statement right with reference to the existence of a political movement, called the "King movement," at the time of the murder?—Yes. I am the person who had to decide whether it should be ended or not; and it was not ended at that time.

42. Is Ngatai's statement, that the death of Moffatt was solely due to that movement, correct?—The European was killed in accordance with our joint principles, and the *taiaha* was left there to mark the reason he was killed. The *taiaha* has since been brought away.

43. Do you know of any private malice or ill-will against Moffatt that might have led to his death?—I never knew that Moffatt had done anything previous to his crossing the forbidden boundary that would have caused his death.

The Hon. Native Minister then questioned Rewi:—

44. *Hon. Mr. Bryce*]. Your name is Manga, and you are a chief of the Ngatimaniapoto tribe?—Yes.

45. You have heard the replies of Ngatai to my questions respecting the murder of a European named Moffatt?—I have.

46. Are his statements correct in relation to the political association called the King movement?—They are correct. I gave the *taiaha* to Ngatai to kill him (Moffatt) with (figurative).

47. Is Ngatai's statement correct with regard to the policy of isolation?—Yes. I fixed the boundaries.

48. So far as you know, is the statement of Ngatai correct that the death of Moffatt was due to his crossing the boundary and nothing else?—That was the only reason.

49. Do you know of any motive of private malice that might have caused this deed besides crossing the boundary?—I do not know of any other reasons that led to his being killed besides his crossing the line, I having given the *taiaha* for that purpose (figurative).

The Hon. Native Minister then questioned Taonui:—

50. *Hon. Mr. Bryce*]. Your name is Taonui, and you are a chief of the Ngatimaniapoto tribe?—Yes.

51. You have heard the statements made by Ngatai?—Yes.

52. Is what he has said with regard to the political association known as the King movement correct?—Yes. It was a great policy of ours.

53. A portion of that policy was the isolation of certain districts and the exclusion of Europeans therefrom?—Yes.

54. So far as you know, was the death of Moffatt due to that policy and nothing else?—Yes; it was solely on account of that policy.

55. Do you know of any private malice that would have led to his being killed?—I do not know of any.

A *taiaha* was sent into that district for the purpose of killing, or to signify that any European who crossed the boundary would be killed.—G. T. WILKINSON.

The foregoing I believe to be a correct verbatim account of the interview held this day between the Hon. the Native Minister and Rewi, Wahanui, Taonui, and Ngatai. The questions and answers were translated by Mr. Wilkinson, and the notes taken by me.—T. W. LEWIS, Under-Secretary. Kihikihi, 19th December, 1883.

I certify that the foregoing is a correct record of an inquiry made to-day by the Hon. the Native Minister, in which I acted as interpreter.—G. T. WILKINSON, Licensed Native Interpreter and Government Native Agent. Kihikihi, 19th December, 1883.

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The Hon. JOHN BRYCE to WAHANUI.

[Translation.]

FRIEND WAHANUI,—

Wellington, 25th January, 1884.

Referring to the inquiry lately held by me at Kihikihi, under "The Amnesty Act, 1882," into the circumstances attending the murder of one Moffatt, in the year 1880, I have now to inform you that on my return to Wellington I laid the notes of evidence taken on that occasion before a meeting of my colleagues, the other members of the Government. The decision was unanimously arrived at that the murder of Moffatt was a murder of a political character, such as was contemplated by the Amnesty Act, and was therefore pardoned by the Proclamation made by His Excellency the Governor, and published in the *New Zealand Gazette* of the 13th February, 1883.

It is my wish therefore that you should tell Ngatai from me that that crime has been pardoned, in order that he may communicate the fact to such other persons as may feel interested.

This, I hope, ends all that trouble, and the *taiaha* may now be brought in and presented, as a token that the evil things of former days are indeed placed behind us. Sufficient. From your friend,  
JOHN BRYCE.

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