

NGATI RAHIRI VERSUS NGATI TAMATERA

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NGATI RAHIRI VERSUS NGATI TAMATERA

Abstract: *Conflict between Ngati Tamatera, of Ohinemuri, and Ngati Rahiri, of Te Aroha, was provoked by the latter believing that members of other hapu had received money for the Aroha Block to which they were not entitled. In addition, the two hapu disagreed over the block's northern boundary. In early 1877 Ngati Rahiri threatened violence and even fired over the heads of several rangatira passing through their land, thereby challenging their right to intrude on it. In response, Ngati Tamatera, with the assistance of Ngati Koi, blocked the road to Te Aroha and also the Waihou River against Ngati Rahiri, although they permitted Pakeha to pass. Pakeha took a relaxed attitude to the conflict, not expecting any real battles occurring during a squabble they understood to have been caused by members of an inferior hapu having their names wrongly included in Crown grants.*

After Ngati Tamatera erected two small and unimpressive pa to block both road and river, Ngati Rahiri retaliated by constructing a similarly unimpressive pa at Omahu, their settlement at Te Aroha. Apart from much posturing, the only actions taken were Ngati Tamatera sending back to Omahu an aged woman who had come down the river in a canoe and Ngati Rahiri stealing pigs and peaches and firing shots near a settlement. The Native Minister and various officials, notably James Mackay, intervened to resolve the conflict, which was ended with a reconciliation initiated by Ngati Tamatera and formalized by a large meeting of both hapu at Omahu.

Once this quarrel was settled, negotiations to enable the Crown to purchase the Aroha Block were resumed.

THE START OF THE CONFLICT

According to James Mackay, 25 Ngati Rahiri refused to sign the deed of cession of the Aroha Block in 1877 because they would receive less than a quarter of what an English speculator was required to pay for Wairakau.¹ 'A very serious quarrel' took place between those who had sold their interests and 'the obstructive party'.² This quarrel had begun at the meeting at Pukerahui, Wiropo Hoterene Taipari's meeting-house at Thames, in December 1876, when other tribes took money for Te Aroha

¹ See paper on special settlements.

² James Mackay to Minister of Public Works, 31 July 1877, *AJHR*, 1877, G-7, p. 8.

despite protests by Ngati Rahiri.³ Later evidence in the land court included brief mention of conflict over the northern boundary of the block resulting in the cursing of Ngati Tamatera rangatira: when some went to survey the Mangaiti boundary, ‘Ngati Rahiri said if they saw these people they would spear them’, or, in one account, would ‘spear Tareranui in the eyes’.⁴ Hirawa Te Moananui⁵ stated that, when he ‘had Mangaiti surveyed’, Ngati Tumutumu ‘robbed me of my Goods Blankets &c, they did this because they were angry with the tribes taking money for Te Aroha’.⁶ According to Tareranui’s son Hoera,⁷

two Committees sat about that statement one at Te Puna one at Te Aroha – At Te Puna the people who said this were proved to be in the wrong, my father was satisfied and did not ask for payment – Te Moananui felt grieved and prepared to sell Te Aroha, and that was the beginning of the sale and the Govt purchased the lot.⁸

The first that Pakeha knew about this conflict was in mid-January 1877, when an excursion party travelled to Te Aroha. ‘A few miles below the Omahu settlement about 50 armed Maoris challenged the steamer, ordering a stoppage, but when they were assured that the boats contained excursionists only’ it was permitted to continue. At Omahu pa, Ngati Rahiri fired their guns and tried to explain their case to the Pakeha, ‘towards whom the greatest friendship and harmony was evinced’.⁹ The following day, it was reported that Ngati Rahiri, ‘who have been so obstructive of late’, had shown it was ‘not all bounce’ [bluster]¹⁰ by firing at Rapata Te Pokiha,¹¹ who was on his way to a meeting of the land court at Cambridge. ‘He was not injured, but did not irritate the Omahu natives by proceeding

³ See Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 10, p. 453.

⁴ See Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Books, no. 16, p. 7; no. 21, p. 195; no. 28B, pp. 90, 109.

⁵ See *Thames Star*, 12 April 1894, p. 2, 30 April 1894, p. 2.

⁶ Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 10, p. 466.

⁷ See *Thames Advertiser*, 20 September 1880, p. 2.

⁸ Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 28B, p. 128.

⁹ *Thames Advertiser*, 16 January 1877, p. 3.

¹⁰ Eric Partridge, *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English*, 8 ed., ed. Paul Beale (London, 1984), p. 124.

¹¹ See paper on Maori land in Hauraki.

after that threat', returning to Thames to catch a steamer to Auckland, from where he took a train.¹² The following year, Karauna Hou¹³ stated that Ngati Rahiri 'fired on some of the Ngatitamatera, and on Hoterene Taipari and others', to challenge their right to intrude on their land.¹⁴ Tinipoaka,¹⁵ a rangatira of Ngati Tamatera, said he was not able to attend this sitting because he was 'turned back' by Ngati Rahiri. 'I did not persevere about going to the Court because N'Rahiri threatened to shoot me if I returned'.¹⁶

NGATI TAMATERA PREPARES TO FIGHT

The Ohinemuri tribes would 'not allow Rapata to be insulted and turned back ... without resenting the insult', and held a korero at which a 'manifesto' was drawn up and sent to Taipari, native agent Edward Walter Puckey, and land purchase officer George Thomas Wilkinson along with a covering letter:

Friends,- Trouble has arisen here between the Ngatirahiri and Ngatitamatera tribes, whereby the Ngatitamatera and Ngatikoi tribes have agreed to act in this decided manner (stop up the road) towards the Ngatirahiri. Will you forward the enclosed notice to the European newspaper so that all our European friends may see it – also our Maori friends – in order that they may know how foolishly the Ngatirahiri people are acting. You have already heard from Te Pokiha (Rapata) the reasons of the committee acting in this way – viz, Ngatirahiri having refused to allow Ngatitamatera to pass through Te Aroha, from whence they had to return. The committee concerning this matter sat yesterday, and a notice has been sent to Ngatirahiri (at Te Aroha) and one (enclosed) has been sent to the Europeans. – From your friend, Wikiriwhi Hautonga.¹⁷

¹² Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 10, p. 282; Waikato Minute Book no. 3, pp. 209-239; *Thames Advertiser*, 17 January 1877, p. 3.

¹³ See paper on his life.

¹⁴ Native Lands Court, *Thames Advertiser*, 12 July 1878, p. 3.

¹⁵ He had no involvement in Te Aroha mining.

¹⁶ Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 10, p. 282.

¹⁷ *Thames Advertiser*, 19 January 1877, p. 3.

Te Wikiriwhi Hautonga,¹⁸ a Ngati Tamatera rangatira who had been appointed by the government as an assessor, was regarded as a friend of the Pakeha.¹⁹ The notice was from ‘all the Ngatitamatera and Ngatikoi’:

1. This is a notice to all people of the Ngatirahiri tribe. Your closing the road and ordering us to turn back has been retaliated upon by the Ngatitamatera and Ngatikoi tribes.
2. We also have decided to close the road through Ohinemuri to you. The road by land will now be closed, and also the River Waihou, and this stopping of the road will be carried out.
3. People belonging to Hauraki tribes and who may be now inland will be allowed to pass through.
4. When they get to Hauraki they will not be allowed to return by this road; they must remain in Hauraki; if they attempt to pass through they will not be allowed.
5. People who live to the southward of the Te Aroha will be allowed to pass, and those of strange tribes who may be residing in Hauraki.
6. The Europeans of the Thames district and those to the southward of Te Aroha are not included in this notice.
7. The closing up of the road will commence on the 17th January, 1877, and will continue during the months that follow.
8. This is a regulation that has been made binding by the Ngatitamatera and Ngatikoi tribes, and if anyone attempts to break (or evade it) he himself will suffer the penalty.²⁰

The *Thames Advertiser* was not alarmed, and urged others to remain calm:

We are at no loss to understand the meaning of the little native squabble at Te Aroha, and intending excursionists to the mountain need be under no apprehension that their wives and families may have to mourn their loss should they venture near the scene of rifle shooting and bombast, on the banks of the Waihou river, at the Ohinemuri settlement. Those of us present when this so-called affray took place do not seem to have been scared, and to say that the second excursion is unwise and calculated to provoke hostility is all moonshine. Those who assert anything of the kind are ignorant of the facts of the case, and can

¹⁸ See Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Books, no. 5, pp. 301-302, 321; no. 13, pp. 123-125, 246-147, 260-262; no. 16, pp. 192, 195, 198-201, 203, 206.

¹⁹ For instance, *Thames Advertiser*, Ohinemuri Correspondent, 17 August 1875, p. 3, 8 September 1887, p. 2.

²⁰ *Thames Advertiser*, 19 January 1877, p. 3.

know nothing of the circumstances which led to the tribal dispute from whence all this bloodless display arose. Briefly, it is the same old story. The source of all quarrels with the natives in this country has been the land, and this is no exception to the rule. One section of the natives assert that they have been compelled to divide their birthright – their heritage in the lands of the Aroha – with men who have no right to be made participators in the same. They allege that certain natives of an inferior standing, who had forfeited their rights to certain lands according to Maori law, have had their names inserted in the Crown grants, and have been made recipients of the proceeds of sale, solely because they were fortunate enough to become indebted to the Government and to certain other persons by means of the “raihana” or order system. How far this is correct, as applied to all those charged with practicing such system, we are unable to say, but there is no doubt a large amount of truth in the charge. This is doubtless irritating and annoying to those who consider themselves robbed so openly, and of course, through the intervention of the Government and their Native Lands Court. Rapata, of Ohinemuri, was on his way to the Waikato Lands Court to complete certain matters connected with these and other titles, when he was driven back, in the presence of the excursionists, and amidst a few volleys of rifle shots fired in the air as a token of their displeasure. Since then the Ohinemuri natives have resolved to pay them out in their own way, by preventing them from visiting Ohinemuri or Hauraki.²¹

On 24 January, Henry Dunbar Johnson, the Ohinemuri correspondent for the *Thames Advertiser*,²² reported that local Maori were ‘determined to demonstrate to their Te Aroha neighbours that they also can show a bold front’ by closing the road and erecting a pa near it:

As soon as this determination was known all available forces were mustered, armed, dressed in their warpaint, with white feathers stuck in their hair. Such tools as they could gather together were then furnished to the engineering portion of the little army, and off they marched towards Rotokohu [on the western side of Karangahake mountain]. When they reached an eminence near Te Moananui’s hill [near the road to Te Aroha], small, and anything but suitable (I should say) for the purpose, they piled arms in true military style, and commenced operations which they called building a Pah. At four o’clock in the afternoon they had erected about a chain of palisading, and dug a trench

²¹ Editorial, *Thames Advertiser*, 22 January 1877, p. 2.

²² See paper on Lavinia and Henry Dunbar Johnson.

about two feet deep around it. Being very much gratified with the result of their labours, they were called to arms, and ordered to fire a volley – for what reason they wasted their powder and shot it is impossible for any one to tell. Firing continued promiscuously until dusk, when most of them returned to their homes. During last night their martial ardour must have increased, for about 100 sallied forth this morning about 10 o'clock to join their comrades. Sub-Inspector [Stuart] Newall [of the Armed Constabulary]²³ visited them yesterday. They told him that white men could pass and re-pass as often as they liked, but they meant to pot an Aroha Maori if he came near enough – an occurrence, which I think, is not the least likely to take place.²⁴

On the following day Johnson remained unimpressed:

Building the Pah is still going on, but the heavy rain of yesterday must have put a damper on their energies, for only 10 are now at work. Yesterday a challenge was sent to the Te Aroha natives to come down and fight; if an answer is returned to the negative the challengers intend to proceed to Te Aroha in small parties and endeavor to get their opponents to fire upon them. Why they don't do it without so much fuss I cannot tell, for the whole of the Aroha people would not make one "square meal" for the Ohinemuri natives if they were cannibals as of old. I am informed that Taipari and old Riwai are coming up as pacifiers, and I have not the least doubt that they will succeed in their mission before a hostile shot is fired.²⁵

By the end of the month, a pa being constructed at Te Puke, the junction of the Ohinemuri and Waihou rivers, was 'making progress, although only slowly'.²⁶ One week later, a Thames reporter visited 'the fortifications':

The site chosen for the river Pah and the blockade is well selected. That is at the junction of the Waihou and Ohinemuri rivers, and the entrance to both is stopped by stakes, bare room for the river steamers to pass into the Ohinemuri being allowed, and booms are provided for blocking this entrance at night. As the steamer passed, the natives could be observed in the

²³ See *Observer*, 27 July 1918, p. 4, 12 April 1919, p. 4; *Evening Post*, 4 August 1919, p. 8; *Free Lance*, 6 August 1919, p. 4.

²⁴ Ohinemuri Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 26 January 1877, p. 3.

²⁵ Ohinemuri Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 26 January 1877, p. 3.

²⁶ *Thames Advertiser*, 1 February 1877, p. 3.

entrenchments in possession, but they did not look a formidable lot. The flimsy structure of the Pah is sufficient evidence that nothing serious was intended.

His later examination of its interior confirmed this impression:

It is certain that the position chosen is a good one, and the embrasures and the earth works command both rivers admirably, but the earth works are shallow and flimsy, the palisading slight, and badly put together, and, in fact, the whole thing could be blown away by one of the Naval Brigade guns. A similar fort has been erected on the main road to Te Aroha, but here the position is not so good, for there are many spurs and gullies leading down to Paeroa or up to Mackaytown by which this road can be avoided. The natives in charge of each fort are encamped at the back, and amuse themselves all day long at intellectual games of poker, all fours, and others of a like nature. I suppose the upshot of the joke will be that the Native Department will have to pay the cost of erecting these fortifications, and calm the troubles of the native mind by liberal donations of flour, sugar, and kai.²⁷

In mid-February, Johnson, or another Ohinemuri correspondent, informed the Auckland press that neither of these ‘fortifications, as some are pleased to term the collection of ti-tree scrub’, were ‘cause for special comment, but prove that the erectors have not the least intention of fighting’. He expected the Native Minister would visit to settle the dispute, and supposed ‘this means another payment to them’.²⁸ The booms were sited where ones had been placed in the early 1820s to prevent Ngapuhi travelling up the river.²⁹

NGATI RAHIRI PREPARES TO FIGHT

Meanwhile, preparations for war were taking place at Omahu. A Pakeha who spent a week inspecting the area reported that Ngati Rahiri were ‘entrenching themselves in true Maori style’ in case of attack:

²⁷ Own Reporter, ‘The Ohinemuri Goldfield’, *Thames Advertiser*, 7 February 1877, p. 3.

²⁸ Ohinemuri Correspondent, *Auckland Weekly News*, 17 February 1877, p. 8.

²⁹ Leslie G. Kelly, ‘Tapuariki and Raupa’, *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, vol. 54 no. 3 (September 1945), p. 207.

The natives are armed, and are told often to mount guard over the river at two look-out stations on the banks of the Waihou stream. They are very bouncable to Europeans, and try to levy blackmail at every opportunity, although not very successfully. One of their number, called Munga,³⁰ is thoroughly equipped with a rifle, sword, &c, of an officer of the Shortland Native Volunteer Corps, and makes bold to say he had done with playing with soldiers now that he has obtained a fine equipment, and would prefer to use his weapons against the Pakeha, as he did in the Taranaki war, and received a terrible wound, which troubles him to this day. The natives talk of shooting Mr James Mackay, Jun., if he goes amongst them, in consequence of the part he has taken in getting the land disposed of....

Although the Aroha natives profess to be unfriendly towards the Ohinemuri natives and to be entrenching themselves in consequence, they take no pains to meet their adversary, for whilst they are engaged getting timber out of the bush for palisading the Pah, the Ohinemuri natives come within gun-shot of the bush gathering peaches, which they bring to Shortland for sale.³¹

Later, it was rumoured in Ohinemuri that Ngati Rahiri would build a large pa 'at or on the foot of the mountain, capable of holding about 2,000 men, and that they will be assisted by Te Kooti's butcher, who has notified that he will visit the natives defending the Pahs at Rotokohu and Puke and "scoff" them all'.³² In late February a visitor described the construction of the Omahu pa:

The pah is being built upon an irregular piece of ground running into the swamp near the river, but separated from it by a small arm of the swamp (a roadway connecting river bank with pah). The natives appear to be divided into three sets or gangs usually – but a fourth had to be formed to come to Hamilton for provisions – of the other three, one set was at Mr [William] Moon's place [a farm near the western bank of the river]³³ catching and preserving eels, the second set was in the bush felling timber and transporting it to the pah, whilst the other set were busy at the fortifications. The fortifications are this wise: Logs of trees from one foot to two feet through and of not less than twelve feet in length were reared up with their ends stuck

³⁰ He had no involvement in Te Aroha mining.

³¹ *Thames Advertiser*, 1 February 1877, p. 3.

³² 'A Correspondent', *Thames Advertiser*, 19 February 1877, p. 3.

³³ See *Waikato Times*, 27 February 1877, p. 2; he had no involvement in Te Aroha mining.

some three feet in the ground. These were twenty feet apart the whole way around the pah, between these again, at equal distances were two other pieces of timber about twelve inches through, then again mid-way between each of these already erected was another one of some eight or nine inches through – the remaining small spaces were filled with strong stout fencing ti-tree, the whole being lashed to saplings placed longitudinally upon the outside; the lashings appeared to me to be Rata vine. We were informed there was to be another and smaller barricade outside this one also a mud embankment. The natives informed us they had four small cannon which they intended to mount so as to command the river and entrance to pah – we did not see this heavy artillery, neither did we see any other instrument of war save one rusty double-barrelled fowling piece at the upper store near the springs. When completed, this pah will, no doubt, be a formidable defence, and not easy to capture. The chief, “the Crown” [Karauna Hou],³⁴ was very anxious we should let it be known that the pah was not being built as a menace to the Europeans, but against the natives lower down the river, with whom they have a quarrel. When they have completed the pah their intention is to endeavour to reach Shortland in their boats (they have five splendid large whale-boats tied up at the pah), if they succeed quietly and unmolested well and good we shall hear no more of it – but if opposed they will endeavour to fight their way through – as, go to Shortland, they are determined. The pah is to be a place of safety for their sick, and their children, as well as a city of refuge for themselves if necessary. They had no flag flying, but the party gone to Hamilton for provisions was to bring back either a flag or the material for making one.³⁵

In mid-March, the pa was described as being ‘of considerable size and strength’,³⁶ but a Pakeha who visited one month later was somewhat less impressed:

The pah is a very large one, and constructed at the foot of the Aroha mountain, about 100 yards from the banks of the Waihou river. It is rectangular shaped, about 250 feet long, and 100 feet broad. The chief timbers are very large in dimensions, and evidently intended for a much stronger pah, for at present it has only one row of ti-tree stakes erected around it. On the inside of the pah, next the mountain, and the end facing the Ohinemuri

³⁴ See paper on his life.

³⁵ ‘A Trip from Hamilton through Piako to the Thames Valley and Back Again’, *Waikato Times*, 1 March 1877, p. 2.

³⁶ *Thames Advertiser*, 17 March 1877, p. 3.

road, rifle pits substantially traversed have been dug, but the side next the river, with the exception of the pallisading, is entirely unprotected. Winter quarters are being built, and there are two stores inside, but the supply of stores is very limited.³⁷

ATTEMPTS TO END THE BLOCKADE

In mid-February, Te Moananui and others inspected the Te Puke pa and the obstructions placed across the river. It was rumoured that Ngati Maru would have to come upriver so that 'certain ceremonies' could take place 'before the Aukati', or blockade,³⁸ could be ended 'and the harmony of the contending parties restored'.

The Maori flag has been flying above the Queen's flag at the Rotokohu Pah, and this coming to the knowledge of a gallant young officer of the Thames Navals, who is here on a visit, he threatened to bring up a posse of his men and show them how weak their defences were. The Maoris are supplied with splendid rifles, six-shooters, abundance of ammunition and cartouche boxes, and several of them are to be seen in full dress with only a shawl around their loins, a cartouche box over their shoulder, a six-shooter in a belt, and a single or double-barrelled rifle in hand.³⁹

On Sunday, 19 February, when 'a party of neutral natives' came down the river in a canoe, they were boarded at the Puke pa and when 'an old woman belonging to the enemy' was discovered she was placed on another canoe and sent halfway back to Te Aroha 'under the charge of an armed party'. This development 'caused quite a sensation' at Ohinemuri. By then, a new set of booms extending across the river had replaced those washed away in a flood. Amongst Pakeha, there was disagreement over whether 'mischief' was brewing or whether the disagreement would be 'amicably settled' with 'a great feed and a korero'. It was believed that sending down the old woman had been a 'try on'.⁴⁰ Puckey later reported that Ngati Rahiri 'were continually making use of offensive expressions towards

³⁷ Own Reporter, 'The Ohinemuri Quarrel: The Meeting at Te Aroha', *Thames Advertiser*, 25 April 1877, p. 3.

³⁸ P.M. Ryan, *The New Dictionary of Modern Maori* (Auckland, 1973), p. 10.

³⁹ 'A Correspondent', *Thames Advertiser*, 19 February 1877, p. 3.

⁴⁰ Ohinemuri Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 20 February 1877, p. 3.

Ngatitamatera, and acts of aggression on their part were frequent'.⁴¹ An effigy of the head of Te Hira's sister, Mere Kuru, was displayed on the palisade of their pa.⁴²

On 22 February, Daniel Pollen,⁴³ the Colonial Secretary and Native Minister, went to Paeroa, accompanied by Puckey and the magistrate, the booms being drawn aside to let his steamer through. 'The Native Minister soon afterwards interviewed the Maoris at the newly-established quarters, and speechifying commenced and continued for nearly two hours. The natives were very bouncable at first, but cooled down after some time, and expressed a willingness to submit to reasonable terms', although they strongly opposed his visiting Ngati Rahiri, who on the previous morning had left Omahu for Ohinemuri.

Threats had been freely exchanged between the belligerent tribes since then, but nothing like actual hostilities were really anticipated by those more intimately acquainted with them. The Aroha natives were encamped halfway between their settlement and the junction of the rivers, and it was reported that they intended to make an attack on the Puke pa. Communication was kept up between the Puke and Rotokohu pas, and Maoridom seemed big with something important, from the galloping to and fro of stalwart natives decked with feathers, &c.

Pollen was to remain for a couple of days 'to hear both sides of the question, and if necessary, argue the matter out with them', and Mackay was coming from Waikato to assist.⁴⁴ The following notice, sent from 'No. 2 Redoubt', was published on the following day:

Martial Law. This is a notification that it may be known by both Europeans and Maoris that the roads in the vicinity of the Fortifications will be CLOSED to Travellers between the hours of 9 p.m. and 5 a.m. until further notice. The River will be Open for the Steamers at all times, day or night.

⁴¹ E.W. Puckey to Under-Secretary, Native Department, 8 June 1877, *AJHR*, 1877, G-1, p. 5.

⁴² Ohinemuri Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 6 March 1877, p. 3.

⁴³ See *New Zealand Herald*, 19 May 1896, p. 5.

⁴⁴ Own Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 23 February 1877, p. 3.

It was signed by six rangatira, including Tanumeha Te Moananui, Wikiriwhi Hautonga, and Rapata Te Pokiha.⁴⁵ Pakeha were assured that the notice ‘was not intended to apply to them’.⁴⁶ As a result of the discussions with Pollen, Te Hira and Te Moananui were appointed to make terms with Ngati Rahiri. ‘The Ohinemuri natives consider that all the expense they have been put to in making such vigorous preparations for war should be defrayed by the Aroha natives’.⁴⁷

Johnson reported that Hoani Nahe⁴⁸ and a party of Ngati Maru had gone to Te Aroha ‘by way of Piako. Rumour says they are taking up arms and ammunition’. At Ohinemuri, Maori carried out ‘an ancient custom, by taking a stick which had been specially tapued to a point outside the aukati line and leaving it there, amidst great demonstration. On their return they danced a war dance on the sandspit in front of the pa’ at Te Puke.⁴⁹ Ngati Tamatera were reinforced by nearly 40 Maori from Tarapipipi’s settlement on the Piako River, and ‘the steamer “Pearl” has been chartered as a gun-boat, and now guards the river, with spears hoisted at the mast-head and flagstaff, and the Maori ensign flying’.⁵⁰ One day later, this vessel took Tarapipipi and his people to Thames to discuss the conflict with Mackay. Meanwhile, ‘some’ Ngati Rahiri were still camped about half-way between Omahu and Te Puke.⁵¹

ATTEMPTS TO EXPLAIN AND TO END THE QUARREL

On 24 February, Hoani Nahe’s letter to a Pakeha explaining Ngati Rahiri’s position was published in a Maori newspaper. He blamed Mackay for the ‘confusion’ because he gave money for the Aroha block to all the Hauraki tribes despite their having no claim, as he had explained in his letter to Donald McLean. Hence Ngati Rahiri ‘were determined to keep the land’ and erected a pa to prevent it being surveyed. Ngati Rahiri had prevented Rapata Te Pokiha going to Cambridge as they ‘stopped all people of Hauraki going by Te Aroha to that court, no matter who they were’.

⁴⁵ Notice, *Thames Advertiser*, 23 February 1877, p. 2.

⁴⁶ Own Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 23 February 1877, p. 3.

⁴⁷ *Thames Advertiser*, 24 February 1877, p. 3.

⁴⁸ See paper on the Aroha Block to 1879.

⁴⁹ Ohinemuri Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 26 February 1877, p. 3.

⁵⁰ *Thames Advertiser*, 27 February 1877, p. 2.

⁵¹ *Thames Advertiser*, 28 February 1877, p. 2.

I write this letter to you in great sorrow. I have heard, from good authority, that the Ngatirahiri are determined to come and force a passage past the guarding pah, in the face of death, all they wish is to make the people of Hauraki commit some act of aggression, that is that they should ignore the desire of the chiefs for peace. Hence they come to break the embargo and to die there. And they will clear it, as they say their land has not gone from them, after which they can fear death.

Their attacking the pa would be a 'stupid act' causing 'evil', for Ngati Tamatera 'and its sub-tribes have collected at Ohinemuri to take heart of this matter' and to speak of the deaths of their ancestors 'for which they have not had satisfaction'. Ngati Tamatera were delighted at the prospect of obtaining 'revenge for deeds of old'. He had urged Ngati Rahiri to stay at Te Aroha 'and to think of their land at Te Aroha, and not die on other land but Te Aroha. Also that the acts they do may be spoken of as right, that is, if they die for their land'.⁵² According to 'Gossiper', apparently a Maori, his letter was written 'in distress over the trouble that had sprung up amongst the Hauraki tribes', which had caused him to be 'laughed at and jeered by other people'.⁵³ His interpretation that the conflict was 'because of an old grievance and defeat that has not been squared off' was 'utterly repudiated' by Ngati Tamatera, for they had obtained utu for the battle they said was referred to.⁵⁴

At the beginning of March, Mackay travelled to Ohinemuri to end the quarrel.⁵⁵ He was welcomed to No. 2 Redoubt for a korero, but was told that, 'after having seen for himself what was going on, he must return the way he came', as had Pollen and Puckey. All the speakers 'disclaimed having commenced the trouble', blaming Tutuki, a Ngati Rahiri rangatira,⁵⁶ and Ngati Rahiri generally, Te Moananui saying that if the latter 'would come here and talk over matters all might yet be well'. When Riki Paka⁵⁷ attempted to defend 'Tutuki and his people', Te Hira condemned his words

⁵² Letter from Hoani Nahe, *Te Wananga*, 24 February 1877, pp. 68-69; English translation printed in *Thames Advertiser*, 13 March 1877, p. 3.

⁵³ Letter from 'Gossiper', *Thames Advertiser*, 7 April 1877, p. 3.

⁵⁴ *Thames Advertiser*, 17 March 1877, p. 3.

⁵⁵ *Thames Advertiser*, 3 March 1877, p. 2.

⁵⁶ See paper on Maori Te Aroha.

⁵⁷ He was not involved with Te Aroha mining.

but also indicated ‘that if Tutuki and the others showed any disposition to be conciliatory things would assume a clearer aspect. They need not think to bounce it out’. Mackay then spoke, holding ‘a finely carved taiaha named “Te Aroha,” which had been given up to him’ by Ngati Haua when he paid the balance of the money promised by Donald McLean, ‘thus indicating that they had invested him with their “mana” over the land’.

He said he did not take cognizance of the good or the bad fortifications, or what not. The first curse had been directed towards himself, and the Aroha people had threatened to shoot him. He would take no notice of what they said about his proceeding or returning. He would please himself, and they could please themselves. Who cared about curses, which killed nobody? He would not ask their permission to go, but would now inform them that he intended to go to Te Aroha. He had been free to travel about in former times, and he did not intend to be stopped now. He would go up to Tutuki’s pah, and invite them to carry out their threat of shooting him.

Having been ‘cursed and threatened’, as he was ‘determined to see it out’ he would go to Te Aroha. ‘Who would stop him?’ Mere Kuru responded that he was travelling via Te Aroha

with the deliberate intention of trampling upon their arrangements, and it would lead to fighting. She asked Mr Mackay “How about her head, which had been stuck up in effigy on Tutuki’s pah?” – Mr Mackay asked “How about his belly, which they had threatened to riddle with bullets?” – Mere Kuru said he ought to have brought his belly down from Cambridge to seek satisfaction. If he went up this way it would cause greater trouble, as the people here would follow him up and fight.

After ‘a lively set-to’ with a rangatira accompanied by interjections by Mere Kuru, Mackay ‘said that they might quarrel with the people at Te Aroha, but he had the land’. Mere Kuru responded that Mackay ‘thought only about getting satisfaction for what had been said about his belly, and did not take into consideration what had been said about their heads and about the women and children’. After Mackay repeated that nobody would stop him going to Te Aroha, two rangatira said that if he did go ‘Tutuki’s people would not carry out their threats, which were, in that respect, empty bounce, as they would be afraid of consequences, he being a European, but what they had said about the people here was meant in earnest, and they

would carry out their threats [at] the first opportunity'. A woman from Piako indicated that her people had stopped Hoani Nahe taking guns and ammunition to Te Aroha; Johnson did not record what she revealed about 'the meeting at Tutuki's pah'. Mackay then stated that 'he was not going to take any message from them, either for good or evil. He was going on his own hook, and would not be stopped by anybody'. In reply to a question, he said he was not going to pay Ngati Rahiri 'any money on this occasion. He could have done that at Cambridge if he had wished to do so'. Once again Mackay was told that he was going against the wishes of Ngati Tamatera, who 'would follow, and demand satisfaction': should 'evil' ensue, he would be to blame. Mackay repeated his intention:

He was not acting foolishly, and he would advise them not to interfere with him. He was not taking any of the opposing tribes with him. He was not going to pay money, but to lay certain proposals before the people at Te Aroha, and he intended to go. Let them not be dark, or think that he wished to trample on them. He could have gone by other roads, but considered it better to let them see what he was doing, so that they should not be able to say that he was doing things secretly.

Te Moananui and Hata Paka⁵⁸ (the latter being 'Tukukino's right-hand man' and Ngati Tamatera's 'general commanding in chief')⁵⁹ urged him to go 'by some other road', Hata saying that 'they would not interfere with ordinary Europeans' but Mackay 'was in a different position' because he represented the government. Mackay explained that he was carrying out Pollen's instructions by going; after more speeches, he responded:

He said he had no desire to trample on Ngatitamatera, or any other tribe. They were the sellers of the land, and he was the buyer, and it was now his. He agreed with Rapata that Tutuki's people had no right to act as they did when he and others were going up to Cambridge, as they were not going on business connected with the Aroha block, but simply to attend the Lands Court, as they themselves were. He had reasons for going, but would not tell them what they were. If he did it could be justly insinuated that he went by their wish, or at any rate with their knowledge and consent. As it was nobody could say that they had receded from their position. With regard to the curses referred to, he would only say that those who were quick to curse were

⁵⁸ He was not involved with Te Aroha mining.

⁵⁹ *Auckland Weekly News*, 23 March 1878, p. 15; *Thames Advertiser*, 18 March 1878, p. 3.

generally slow to fight. If they had anything to say about the land let them say it to him, but if it was a quarrel amongst themselves they should not interfere with him in consequence.

Mackay concluded by saying that 'the discussion had lasted a long time', repeated that he would go by whatever road he chose, and then spoke about developments in Waikato, especially the arrival of the railway at Ngaruawahia.⁶⁰

In Mackay's absence, 'every day Maori troopers mounted cap-a-pie'⁶¹ were 'to be seen galloping backwards and forwards' near Paeroa. Johnson wondered how long this would last, being convinced that they were 'giving themselves a great deal of trouble about nothing; but time is no object to them'. He considered that Ngati Rahiri would 'suffer most' because they could not bring their produce down the river.⁶² Three days after the korero, Mackay returned to the pa from Omahu 'safe and sound' and reported progress, which Johnson understood was 'so far satisfactory. His position as mediator being established, a few trips backwards and forwards will doubtless bring about a reconciliation'. Ngati Tamatera, 'keeping up appearances to the last', were busily 'enlarging and strengthening with double pallisading' the Te Puke pa'.⁶³ The following day, he reported that a messenger named Te Hoterini, accompanied by a half-caste and 'old Tareranui', had arrived at No. 2 Redoubt from the King Country. 'There was a large muster to hear the king's message. He wishes them to stop quarrelling', which Ngati Tamatera was willing to do if Ngati Rahiri made 'the first step, and not otherwise'.⁶⁴

On 17 March, the *Thames Advertiser* stated that Ngati Tamatera, having been paid for their interests, were 'willing to support the government in their claims'. Their quarrel with Ngati Tumutumu, as Ngati Rahiri was named in this report, was 'for the curses which have been uttered against them for selling' their interests. Should Ngati Tumutumu come to the pa near the booms 'and land peacefully', Ngati Tamatera were

⁶⁰ Ohinemuri Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 6 March 1877, p. 3.

⁶¹ Not traced in any dictionary of slang. Was it a word-play on 'kapai', meaning 'good?': see Harry Orsman, *A Dictionary of Modern New Zealand Slang* (Auckland, 1999), p. 74; David McGill, *The Reed Dictionary of New Zealand Slang* (Auckland, 2003), p. 119.

⁶² Ohinemuri Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 8 March 1877, p. 3.

⁶³ Ohinemuri Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 9 March 1877, p. 3.

⁶⁴ Ohinemuri Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 10 March 1877, p. 3.

‘prepared to discuss the question, and to entertain it in the proper spirit, but any attempt to pass the booms before the curses are atoned for, and apologized for, will result in bloodshed’. Any attempt to ‘force the boom’ would ‘be at the cost of many lives’.

The Ngatitumutumu came to the Okahukura settlement yesterday, and in the absence of the people belonging to it killed several pigs, and took away a quantity of peaches belonging to Ngatitamatera. Some scouts of their party came to within a mile and a half of the pah, and fired a double-barrelled gun over the heads of some women and children and Ngatitamatera who were gathering peaches near the bank of the Waihou. Ngatitamatera were called to arms, and the pah was speedily manned with armed men and women ready to give Ngatitumutumu a warm reception if they put in an appearance. Te Hira commanded the pah; Te Moananui, Rapata Te Pokiha, Te Wikiriwhi Hautanga, and Mr Mackay took up their position a few yards higher up the river than the pah, and were prepared to act as mediators, and invited Ngatitumutumu to land peaceably. Ngatitumutumu, however, returned to the pah at Te Aroha.

The newspaper considered it ‘probably’ that the conflict would ‘end in smoke, or an amicable settlement’.⁶⁵ Six days later, it reported that, when Puckey visited to talk ‘over matters’, he had ‘not made much impression’, and little had changed.

A day or two ago a party of the Aroha natives came down, fired a volley over the pah erected by the Ohinemuri natives, and then retreated. Whether this is a challenge or not remains to be seen, but it has certainly not improved the turn of events, or the tempers of some of the principal chiefs, which seem very much ruffled of late.⁶⁶

On the same day, the Rev. George Maunsell, of the Church Missionary Society, based at Tauranga,⁶⁷ arrived from Te Aroha to talk with Ngati Tamatera ‘with the hope of effecting a reconciliation’. Some Ngaiterangi had gone from Tauranga to Te Aroha and were ‘disposed to act as mediators’.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ *Thames Advertiser*, 17 March 1877, p. 3.

⁶⁶ *Thames Advertiser*, 23 March 1877, p. 3.

⁶⁷ See *Mission and Moko: Aspects of the work of the Church Missionary Society in New Zealand, 1814-1882*, ed. Robert Glen (Christchurch, 1992), p. 205.

⁶⁸ Mackaytown Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 26 March 1877, p. 3.

At the end of March, Sub-Inspector Robert Bullen,⁶⁹ when going upriver to Paeroa, seized a keg of bullets being sent to Te Aroha by boat. 'The keg was in a dirty sack, and was supposed to be a parcel of corned beef'; its discovery caused 'a great sensation' at Paeroa.⁷⁰ Also at the end of the month, the chief judge of the land court told Ngati Tamatera that, while they continued to obstruct the river and prevent Ngati Rahiri attending the court, he would 'refuse to adjudicate upon' any of their claims. Ngati Tamatera repeated that, should Ngati Rahiri 'make the first advances towards an apology and settlement of the differences', they would be 'quite willing to shake hands and withdraw all opposition' and 'meet them half-way', but otherwise they were happy to let the hearings of their claims lapse.

On 4 April, Mackay arrived in Ohinemuri on his way to a meeting of the court. When passing through Omahu he had 'a very unsatisfactory reception', some Ngati Rahiri firing over his head 'to express their disapproval of his travelling that way'.⁷¹ Mackay later wrote that Ngati Paoa and Ngati Whanaunga had asked him

to allow them to proceed to Te Aroha and drive off or kill this handful of Ngatirahiri, in consequence of curses they had uttered against them. Had I encouraged this step, it would have been taken. I visited the Aroha on three occasions, and was threatened with violence, and had several bullets fired over my head.⁷²

On his third visit, 'the whistling of several bullets over my head' made him realize that he was 'looked on as the head and front of the offending, and deemed to be as much an enemy' as Ngati Tamatera.⁷³

By then, the pa erected 'in a very temporary manner' at Te Puke had been 'considerably strengthened' and another one had been erected. Both had 'covered ways and parapets', embankments, and 'substantial winter quarters' that could house 'about 400 fighting men'. The strengthened booms remained closed unless a boat had to pass through, and rifles and

⁶⁹ See *Thames Advertiser*, 29 November 1878, p. 3; *New Zealand Herald*, 'Ramblings by a Tramp', 22 September 1887, p. 6, 31 July 1889, p. 5; *Otago Witness*, 29 January 1891, p. 31.

⁷⁰ Ohinemuri Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 30 March 1877, p. 3.

⁷¹ *Thames Advertiser*, 7 April 1877, p. 3.

⁷² James Mackay to Minister of Public Works, 31 July 1877, *AJHR*, 1877, G-7, p. 8.

⁷³ Letter from James Mackay, *Auckland Weekly News*, 9 June 1877, p. 19.

double-barrelled guns were 'conspicuous in the hands of the half-clad Maori warrior'.⁷⁴ There were 'war dances' within the pa.⁷⁵

On 12 April, Maunsell wrote to Pollen explaining the 'hostile positions'. He had visited Ngati Rahiri 'in company with the portion of Ngaiterangi resident at Te Matapihi', who had failed in their attempt at mediation. Ngati Rahiri complained that the government sought their lands because other Hauraki tribes had received loans from it. Despite opposing this, they were 'ready to hand over to Government such of their own lands as were sufficient to liquidate debts contracted by themselves', but they had not received a reply to their letter to McLean. 'They refused to allow certain of their opponents to travel over their land en route to Cambridge to attend a land court affecting their land' and had also 'declined to allow any of those who had laid claim to their property to pass their way'. Having been asked to intercede with their opponents and the government, Maunsell met with Ngati Tamatera, who were prepared to settle the issue amicably if Ngati Rahiri would discuss it in a friendly manner, but 'if they attempted to force their way down to the lower Thames they would fire upon them'. According to Maunsell, Ngati Rahiri admitted that Ngati Tamatera did own portions of the Aroha but not those ones currently under contention in the court; they refused to meet Ngati Tamatera as proposed, but agreed to meet at Shortland. Ngati Rahiri claimed they were 'being oppressed both by Government and by the more powerful Ngatitamatera' and that their appeal to McLean had been ignored. Maunsell recommended the urgent appointment of a commission to 'see that justice be done, and possible bloodshed be prevented'.⁷⁶

THE DISPUTE IS SETTLED

A few days later, a korero held at Paeroa revealed that Ngati Tamatera were 'getting rather tired of the war'. It decided to send Te Hira and Te Moananui to Te Aroha to invite Ngati Rahiri to come to Ohinemuri to discuss the dispute 'with a view to effect a reconciliation'.⁷⁷ Instead,

⁷⁴ *Thames Advertiser*, 7 April 1877, p. 3.

⁷⁵ Letter from 'Gossiper', *Thames Advertiser*, 7 April 1877, p. 3.

⁷⁶ George Maunsell to Daniel Pollen (Native Minister), 12 April 1877, Maori Affairs Department, MA 1, 13/86, ANZ-W.

⁷⁷ *Thames Advertiser*, 17 April 1877, p. 3.

because of a dream of Te Moananui's, the rangatira of Hauraki held a korero on 17 April.

Te Moananui dreamt that he saw a canoe filled with his ancestors, who were rowing towards the sea. He asked them to take him on board. They would not, but told him to take two potatoes and go out seawards, when he would meet a serpent with his mouth open, and further on he would see an open tomb. He was to put one potato into the mouth of the serpent, and the other into the tomb. He did so, and awoke, and as the interpretation of the dream betokened evil to the Maori people, he considered it well to set about making peace.

Accordingly, he travelled to Shortland for 'a long korero' with the principal rangatira, five of whom were appointed 'plenipotentiaries to bring about an amicable settlement'.⁷⁸ Both Taipari and his father were chosen, the latter being asked by Te Moananui to go to Te Aroha to make peace.⁷⁹ Three days later, Puckey, accompanied by these rangatira, 'several minor chiefs', and the chairman of the county council and two other prominent Pakeha travelled to Ohinemuri.⁸⁰ Some had wanted Mackay to accompany them, 'but, after due consideration, it was unanimously agreed' that he should not.⁸¹ A reporter travelling with the party described their reception:

As the steamer approached the Puke, the young women came out of the pah crying out "Haerimai," at the same time waving their shawls. After landing, Te Moananui pointed out the place allotted to the visitors, and the natives inside the pah danced a war dance, fired their guns, and hoisted flags. Shortly afterwards, Ihaka (one of our party) emerged from the bush, clad in the same costume as the figure depicted on the Eden County seal, and challenged the Ohinemuri natives to a war dance, when immediately the whole of the male occupants – about 150 – rushed outside the pah and tried to catch Ihaka, but he was too nimble for them. The Ohinemuri natives were dressed in a similar manner to Ihaka, but decorated like mountebanks, their faces painted with red and yellow ochre, and peacocks' and other feathers stuck in their heads, most of them being armed with spears and single barrelled guns. Te Hira and Tukukino were

⁷⁸ *Thames Advertiser*, 25 April 1877, p. 3.

⁷⁹ Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 10, p. 473.

⁸⁰ *Thames Advertiser*, 20 April 1877, p. 2, 25 April 1877, p. 3; E.W. Puckey to H.T. Clarke, 24 April 1877, Maori Affairs Department, MA 1, 13/86, ANZ-W.

⁸¹ Letter from James Mackay, *Auckland Weekly News*, 9 June 1877, p. 19.

present. Hata Paka, the general commanding in chief, had a whalebone staff in his hand, and Tena Pokiha, the adjutant-general, had an old brown Bess [musket].⁸² Hohepa, the Maori lawyer, was in front with a spear in his hand. Mere Kuru then led off the war dance, and the party kept excellent time. According to Maori usage this was the highest honour that could be conferred on the visitors. A large bullock and several pigs were killed, after which Te Hira came forward with a spear in his hand, and welcomed the party. He then sang a song of welcome.

After several speeches welcoming the visitors and wishing them success, Te Moananui 'took up a piece of stick, and formally handed over to Mr Puckey the booms, the pah, and the fighting, and said that he wished that peace should be made'. Subsequent speakers blamed Ngati Rahiri for the conflict.

The party then went through another dance, and amidst the firing of guns and the waving of flags, the booms were pulled from their position and the siege declared at an end. An unfortunate dog was shot by one of the youngsters. A plentiful repast was then partaken of, and the party dispersed to talk over matters in connection with their mission.⁸³

Another report stated that Ngati Tamatera 'shot the booms. One casualty took place while the firing was going on, Paora Tiunga's⁸⁴ dog having unluckily come in the way of one of the balls. So ends the war in Ohinemuri!' An immediate start was made to demolish No. 1 Redoubt. As Ngati Rahiri still said they would 'never make friends with' Ngati Tamatera, it was considered that the latter had 'placed themselves in a very undignified position'.⁸⁵ Puckey's brief telegram to Pollen reported that the booms had been dismantled and the pa would be evacuated immediately 'so that Aroha natives will be free to come and go as they please. Aroha Natives however refuse to make peace with Ohinemuri'.⁸⁶

⁸² Jonathon Green, *The Cassell Dictionary of Slang* (London, 1998), p. 153.

⁸³ Own Reporter, 'The Ohinemuri Quarrel: The Meeting at Te Aroha', *Thames Advertiser*, 25 April 1877, p. 3.

⁸⁴ See chapter on Maori land in Hauraki.

⁸⁵ *Thames Advertiser*, 24 April 1877, p. 3.

⁸⁶ E.W. Puckey to Daniel Pollen, 24 April 1877 (telegram), Maori Affairs Department, MA 1, 13/86, ANZ-W.

At six o'clock next morning a bell was rung calling all hands to worship. Inside the pah Hauhau prayers were said, and outside morning prayers from the Church of England liturgy were read, all the natives meanwhile devoutly kneeling. Food was again supplied, and the Shortland party again re-embarked amidst the waving of shawls and cries of "haerimai." Five hours' steaming brought us within sight of the Te Aroha pah. Various conjectures were made as to the reception we would receive, when to our surprise the women came out and cried "haerimai," and waved their shawls in the same manner as it was done at the Puke. We thought to take them by surprise, but it transpired that Mr George Lipsey⁸⁷ had witnessed our arrival at the Puke, and had ridden overland and informed the Aroha people that we were coming. On landing we were shown by Mr Lipsey the quarters assigned to us, which were situated about 50 yards from the pah.

Karauna was inside the pa, 'but as most of the men were out at the cultivation', about four miles distant, 'he was unable to appear, for it would have been a breach of Maori etiquette to have appeared without his followers'.⁸⁸ According to Puckey, nearly all Ngati Rahiri were absent, 'some at the several kainga and others in the forest getting out a flagstaff'.⁸⁹ 'Horsemen were dispatched in various directions to bring the people together'. At six o'clock, when one of the visitors met Karauna, he was told that 'nothing could be done' until the other Ngati Rahiri arrived. Women then brought out food, 'walking in single file from the pah to our quarters, and in solemn silence and without any recognition, although intimately acquainted and related to each other, they deposited the food in front of the visitors'. The following morning, a Sunday, 'Karauna said his young men had not yet arrived, and that he was pleased that Hoterene [Taipari], Tamata [Waka], Parota, and Tuterea had accompanied Wirope [Hoterene Taipari] on the mission'. After breakfast, several visitors bathed in the hot pools and drank from the soda springs. 'On the way out Taipari met several old friends, but they merely shook hands and passed on, without interchanging words, the etiquette of the position smothering, pro tem., the best feelings of the human heart'. Most Ngati Rahiri were 'well known' to

⁸⁷ See paper on his life.

⁸⁸ Own Reporter, 'The Ohinemuri Quarrel: The Meeting at Te Aroha', *Thames Advertiser*, 25 April 1877, p. 3.

⁸⁹ E.W. Puckey to H.T. Clarke, 24 April 1877, Maori Affairs Department, MA 1, 13/86, ANZ-W.

the visitors, some having lived near Thames since its goldfield opened. That evening, Tuterea, a lay reader from Kirikiri,

again read prayers very earnestly, and the solemnity and reverence observable on the occasion would have done credit to the most devout pakeha assemblage. The remainder of the evening was spent arranging the business for the next day, and telling Maori legends and other stories, some of which were of a most interesting and practical character, both Maori and pakeha enjoying them very much. On Monday morning Tuterea went within 20 yards of the pah. He called out, "We are come; we are come;" on hearing which, Karauna and his people came out, and there was a general shaking of hands, rubbing of noses, and a great crying match on account of Rapana [Maunganoa]'s death, Rapana's widow taking a most prominent part, and crying very bitterly.⁹⁰

During this tangi for the 'respected' rangatira, held on the morning of 23 April, Karauna 'took a leading part'.⁹¹ The 'real talk' followed the greetings, 'the envoys stating their case in the usual style of Maori oratory'. Puckey announced that he had been given 'the booms, the pahs, and the fighting, the same being represented by a stick, which he then threw to them, at the same time demanding from them a like concession'. Asked by one Ngati Rahiri, Hemi Puru,⁹² whether some Volunteers were coming to attack them, Puckey said there was only one amongst his party, 'and perhaps, as his surname was the same as Puru's, he might regard him as a distant relation'. He assured them there would be no attack.

HEMI PURU said this quarrel will not be given into your hands. With regard to what Mr Puckey says, that now there is no one for us to quarrel with – it is not so, there is the pakeha for us to quarrel with. There are millions of pakehas coming here (so I have heard) to quarrel with me; so that if you refuse to quarrel with me there is still the pakeha for me to quarrel with.

Speaking as 'one deeply interested in the welfare of the Maori people', Alexander Brodie,⁹³ the chairman of the county council, urged

⁹⁰ Own Reporter, 'The Ohinemuri Quarrel: The Meeting at Te Aroha', *Thames Advertiser*, 25 April 1877, p. 3.

⁹¹ *Thames Advertiser*, 24 April 1877, p. 2.

⁹² He was not involved with Te Aroha mining.

⁹³ See *New Zealand Herald*, 16 April 1894, p. 5.

reconciliation. 'It was a good work; it had received Divine approbation, for it was written "Blessed are the peacemakers." ... I entreat of you – nay, I demand – that you hand over to me your pah and your fighting, so that I may be enabled to take them to the people of Ohinemuri, and say that you also desire peace'. After poetically extolling the rays of the 'beautiful sun' as a good omen, he urged them not to 'let the sun again go down on your wrath'.

KARAUNA: What the pakeha has said is good; and, addressing Mr Puckey, suffice it for you that you see us here to-day. It is enough that we meet face to face now. Whose are those booms at Ohinemuri? They are yours, Tamati Waka's, and Te Moananui's. Those booms and pahs are your own. What do I care for them? I have booms of my own; I shall act as I please. When I decide to go and see you, I shall not do so in secret, but openly.

Puckey replied that Karauna might send his messenger any way he wished. 'As Ngatitamatera did not intend to fight them, there was now no danger of any fighting in Hauraki, as there could be no fighting unless there were at least two parties to it'. That ended the korero, and friendly discussions took place, Puckey being held in 'high estimation' because of 'the kindly interest he exhibited in their welfare, and his sound practical advice to them after the official part of the programme was over'.⁹⁴

A newspaper commented that although Ngati Rahiri had ended 'their active antagonism to' Ngati Tamatera, 'they are not yet quite friendly, but it is understood that when some time has elapsed they will come down to Ohinemuri, and to some extent ratify the peace about to be proclaimed'.⁹⁵ As the envoys left, 'Karauna sang out that he and his people were getting a large flagstaff from the bush, and as soon as they got it down he and his people would come down to Shortland, which would probably be during the next month'. After returning to Te Puke, 'Puckey and the envoys gave an account of their mission, which met with the approval of Te Moananui and those assembled. They said it was too much trouble to demolish the pah,

⁹⁴ Own Reporter, 'The Ohinemuri Quarrel: The Meeting at Te Aroha', *Thames Advertiser*, 25 April 1877, p. 3.

⁹⁵ *Thames Advertiser*, 24 April 1877, p. 2.

but that they would cease to occupy it, and that the booms would be destroyed forthwith'.⁹⁶

In reporting to his department, Puckey said that Ngati Rahiri were

exceedingly bitter against all the Hauraki tribes who have some of the purchase money of Te Aroha, but especially against Ngatitamatera, chiefly I think on account of their having paid them back in their own coin in the matter of the Blockade and in accepting the Gauntlet thrown down by them.

I handed over the Booms Pas etc to the Aroha natives demanding a like concession from them which they however refused to make unless Te Aroha block was handed back to them and the liabilities incurred in respect thereto by the rest of the Hauraki people were charged against land in other parts of this district. I pointed out to them the absurdity of their making such a claim and that they had behaved very badly in stopping the Ohinemuri people from going by way of Te Aroha to attend the land court at Cambridge.

He felt Ngati Tamatera had 'behaved very well in this matter directed by their chiefs Moananui and Te Hira, the latter influenced by the former. They have sacrificed their dignity by conceding the Pas', and should be thanked by the government.⁹⁷ In early June he reported Ngati Rahiri were still 'very obdurate', but as Ngati Tamatera were 'determined not to enter into a quarrel', the danger of conflict had ended.⁹⁸

Hoani Nahe later claimed to have averted the conflict by opposing Marutuahu's claim to own Te Aroha. 'I was the only person in Hauraki listened to' by Ngati Rahiri, and was able 'to suppress their desire of fighting', acting as a go-between between them and Mackay.⁹⁹

The *Thames Advertiser* reported that the 'embroglio' had been brought to 'a satisfactory conclusion', with the river obstructions removed and Pakeha able to travel at night from Te Puke to Paeroa 'without being

⁹⁶ Own Reporter, 'The Ohinemuri Quarrel: The Meeting at Te Aroha', *Thames Advertiser*, 25 April 1877, p. 3.

⁹⁷ E.W. Puckey to H.T. Clarke, 24 April 1877, Maori Affairs Department, MA 1, 13/86, ANZ-W.

⁹⁸ E.W. Puckey to Under-Secretary, Native Department, 8 June 1877, *AJHR*, 1877, G-1, p. 5.

⁹⁹ Hoani Nahe to John Sheehan, 23 September 1878, Maori Affairs Department, MA 1, 13/86, ANZ-W.

challenged by an armed sentinel and stating his business'.¹⁰⁰ On 7 May, Maunsell was assured that 'all dangers of collision between the tribes is over and there is a prospect of an amicable arrangement being speedily arrived at'.¹⁰¹ Mackay later thanked the 'valuable aid' provided by Puckey and Taipari 'which principally enabled me to renew negotiations for the outstanding claims'.¹⁰² By early June, as those whom Mackay described as the Ngati Rahiri 'obstructionists' had 'come to the neighbourhood of Shortland' he hoped to conclude the purchase 'within a short time'.¹⁰³ One month later, when the court was in session at Paeroa, some Ngati Rahiri, including Karauna, went there, causing Johnson to suppose that they had 'abandoned all idea of fighting' Ngati Tamatera, 'if they ever had any'.¹⁰⁴ In retrospect, Puckey also wondered whether there had been any threat to 'the peace of the district'.¹⁰⁵ Also in retrospect, the Waitangi Tribunal considered that 'the resolution of this conflict may have seen Ngati Tamatera abandoning their claim to sole control of mining rights in Te Aroha'.¹⁰⁶

A FOOTNOTE

In a footnote to the quarrel, in August 1877 Reha Aperahama petitioned parliament asking that two assessors, Rapata Te Pokiha and Wikiriwhi Hautanga, be relieved of their duties because they 'took an active part in stirring up strife'.¹⁰⁷ Because he stated that the dispute 'almost resulted in an appeal to arms', the Native Affairs Committee recommending an enquiry, and, should it be found that the assessors 'have really

¹⁰⁰ Own Reporter, 'The Ohinemuri Quarrel: The Meeting at Te Aroha', *Thames Advertiser*, 25 April 1877, p. 3.

¹⁰¹ T.W. Lewis to George Maunsell, 7 May 1877, Maori Affairs Department, MA 1, 13/86, AWN-W.

¹⁰² James Mackay to Minister of Public Works, 31 July 1877, *AJHR*, 1877, G-7, p. 8.

¹⁰³ Letter from James Mackay, *Thames Advertiser*, 5 June 1877, p. 3.

¹⁰⁴ Ohinemuri Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 3 July 1877, p. 3.

¹⁰⁵ E.W. Puckey to Under-Secretary, Native Department, 8 June 1877, *AJHR*, 1877, G-1, p. 5.

¹⁰⁶ Waitangi Tribunal, *The Hauraki Case*, vol. 2, p. 467.

¹⁰⁷ Petition of Reha Aperahama to Native Affairs Committee, n.d. [July 1877?], Maori Affairs Department, MA 1, 13/86, ANZ-W; *Journals of the House of Representatives of New Zealand*, 19 July 1877-10 December 1877, p. xi.

improperly stirred up strife', their salaries 'should cease'.¹⁰⁸ Asked for his comment, Puckey wrote that this was 'an unfounded statement. Ngatirahiri were clearly the aggressors and behaved badly all through'.¹⁰⁹ The assessors did not lose their salaries.

CONCLUSION

This storm in a teacup created much excitement amongst hapu members, whereas Pakeha were more amused than alarmed. The conflict was an illustration of disagreements between hapu going back generations, with issues of mana becoming entangled in new developments such as obtaining money from land sales.

¹⁰⁸ 'Reports of Native Affairs Committee', *AJHR*, 1877, I-3, p. 15.

¹⁰⁹ Memorandum by E.W. Puckey, 15 October 1877, Maori Affairs Department, MA 1, 13/86, ANZ-W.