

No. 4

Patea June 19th 1866.

Sir,

I have the honor to report for your information that on the 14th inst. two natives arrived here from Wangongoro to see me, I told them I had been out that day with Mr. Carrington & Mr. Smith in the direction of Manutahi to select sites for Block houses, and that it was my intention to proceed to Ketemerae & Keteonetea & other places for the same purpose taking with me an escort of 16 mounted men, the only reply they made to this was "If you do there will be a fight." I then said suppose I and Mr. Carrington go out unarmed and without men, they replied You will be Tomahawked if you leave the road, as I did not wish to be cause of a renewal of hostilities I gave up the idea for the time and left for Waingongoro the next morning with Mr. Carrington, Mr. P. Smith & Lieut. Wirehana & two orderlies for the purpose of getting as much information as we possibly could from the Country only not leaving the road, we arrived at Waingongoro about 4 p.m. & found Wiremu Hukanui and another Native named Graham, I told Wiremu my instructions respecting the Hau Haus, that I had given most positive orders to all my men, that if they touched any property belonging to the Hauhaus I would send them in prisoners to Wanganui, but that the Hau Haus must behave themselves properly. Wiremu seemed much pleased at this and left for his own place about dark. The next day the

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following took place. Our party started to return to Patea about 10.30 a.m. We had proceeded about 4 miles on our road when Wirehana who was a little in advance saw some Hau Haus in ambush, immediately on being perceived half of them rose & fired a volley at us, they were 27 yards distant (we measured it afterwards) another party then poured a volley into us at the same distance. We wheeled round and made for the Redoubt as fast as possible, we had gone about 300 yards when I called a halt as I had received a very severe blow on the right eye, from a clod of earth thrown up by one of the Horses, our party pulled up, but had again to increase our speed, as another party was seen coming down a blind gully to intercept us. We fortunately escaped from these without injury, I consider it one of the most miraculous escapes on record. Capt. Dawson Commdt. Waingongoro Redoubt kindly furnished me with an escort to Manuwapou and Major Inman also obliged me with one from that post to Patea. The Natives kept shouting out E Riki Kawea E Riki Kawea which may be interpreted "God of War direct our fire".

Two hours after we left Waingongoro a Native Chief named "Hone Pihama" rode into Camp and told Capt. Dawson that the road was not safe for the future. The number of rebels present at this attack I am told by Kerenanai was ⁸⁰ 80 chiefly from Kete-onetea. I have the honor to enclose you a Native letter written to Wiremu Hukanui with translation ^{to facilitate} attached also a small sketch to afford you some idea of the plan laid

for our destruction, my life was the chief one sought for as it has been ever since the capture of the prisoners at Aruhi.

I cannot conclude this hurried & rough report without recording my most cordial thanks to Capt. Dawson 18. R.I. Regt. who lost not a moment in sending out a strong party to scour the country in the neighbourhood of the ambush & also for furnishing an escort for our protection. My thanks are also due to Major Inman who as I before stated assisted me in a similar manner.

The country is now declared to be in a state of war by the Hau Haus "who have warned by letter and by word of mouth that they will ambush and murder right and left. If I had had a sufficient Colonial Force I could have shot every man the night after - nothing could have been more easy - a little dash would have secured success.

I have &c.

(Sd) THOS. McDONNELL Major

Comdt. Col. Forces Patea Dist.

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Capt & Adjt.

P.M. D^t.

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