

Whether William King will be able to come down is still doubtful, but he is quite disposed to attend, but is not able.

There is so much speculation here about the weather that I can hardly avoid inflicting a portion upon your readers. This morning early the whole air was filled with clouds, and not a glimpse of Mount Egmont could be had. Later the clouds shifted suddenly, like a covering scene in a theatre, and the mountain was found completely covered, from summit to base, with snow; but the hopes of a fine day were soon dispelled, as heavy rain fell all the forenoon. About 1 o'clock we were favoured with another revelation of the mountain, showing that even the low ranges at the foot were snow-covered. Grown-up people who had been born in Taranaki declared that they had never seen such a sight; the evening again closed in wet, and it is now certain that nothing will be done till Monday. Several Europeans went over to see Rewi to-day, and were courteously received by the great Maniapoto chief. His immediate relatives are in the whare with him, and about 150 of his tribe are located around. Rewi is in good spirits, and apparently looks forward to the meeting as to pleasure. He has not yet seen Wi Tako and Matene te Whiwhi, and probably their meeting will be a somewhat remarkable incident. These were the two men who originated and elaborated the King movement, and got Rewi to take it up, and bring it to full fruition; they consulted together, having high hopes of raising their people to power and supreme sway in New Zealand, and now, after twenty years, it has come to this: The tribes have been decimated, many great chiefs have been slain in battle, every Native has lost many relatives—they can have no hope in any appeal to the strong arm. Wi Tako and Matene te Whiwhi left the King at an early period, while Rewi struggled on to the last. They have made their bargain for themselves and people; Rewi has to face the inevitable, and make the best bargain he can. No doubt he can make what looks like a splendid bargain. He can get plenty of money, and be called to the Upper House; but there must be an element of bitterness about it, as much of the kind of power that a Maori chief values is gone for ever, and cannot possibly be regained.

Mr. Sheehan has been busily engaged since his arrival receiving deputations of Natives and Europeans, and with office business, which reaches him here by telegrams. Te Wetere, of Mokau, seems to be the most influential man amongst Rewi's followers. It is said that Rewi rather desired that Wetere should be called to the Legislative Council than himself, but that is not unlikely to be done in any case. Te Wetere is a large landowner in one district between Waitara and Mokau, and so is naturally a man of considerable importance in any gathering in this quarter. Te Wahanui, a Ngatimaniapoto chief of importance, has remained at the head-waters of the Wanganui River.

The steamer "Hauraki" entered the Waitara to-day, from the Manukau, about 1 o'clock.

The Premier seems to be very anxious to secure a line of communication between Taranaki and Auckland. The country is very rough, and over the route—such as has been the usual one for travellers—a road or railway could not be made; but some who have explored declare that, by bridging rivers at particular places, and cutting through bush at others, a comparatively easy line could be obtained either for road or rail. If the Natives give the liberty to explore all doubt will soon be set at rest, and where there is such a wide extent of country a good line will no doubt be found. A great deal of interest is taken in the meeting by the settlers of this district. Taranaki has had a sad struggle; it is twenty years behind the rest of New Zealand, having been kept back by its isolated position, by the want of a harbour, and above all, by Native wars. But now the corner seems fairly turned; people are coming from the South and purchasing land, and waking up the old identities by their energy, while settlement is being steadily pushed ahead from the Patea District. With a railway to the south, with communication opened towards Auckland, and with a harbour, Taranaki cannot fail to surpass the most exalted anticipations of the early settlers.

Sunday, 5 p.m.

THE MAORIS PERFORMING THE WEEPING, ETC.

It was arranged that, to facilitate the business of the meeting, the greeting and weeping to take place between Rewi and the chiefs from Wanganui and Wellington should come off to-day, at Waitara. About midday a large party of strangers went up to Rewi's settlement, headed by the following chiefs: Hon. Wi Tako, Mete Kingi, Waiari Turoa, Matene te Whiwhi, Manihera te Toru; the Hon. Mr. Sheehan, Major Brown, Civil Commissioner of the district; Mr. Parris and Mr. Israel were also present, with a number of the residents in the district. The usual ceremony of salutations took place in front of the settlement, and then the weeping began. The women, as usual, played the chief part, each having her head covered with leaves, green being the colour of mourning according to Maori custom. There were three parties there, the people of Taranaki, who had assisted the sale of Waitara, and so brought on the war; Ngatimaniapoto and Waikato, who had sent parties to assist, of whom a large number had been slain; and the Wanganuis, who still remembered that, when the fighting began here, a party of Waikatos came down under Wetina Tiapomutu, who was killed at Mahoetahi, with a large proportion of his party. Subsequently Rewi came with a strong body of Ngatimaniapotos. When the crying had been finished,

Patu said: Welcome to Waitara, the cause of the war, which brought death to so many. Welcome to Waitara, the beginning of the troubles which spread to all parts of the Island, and was the cause of the destruction of our children.

Mete Kingi: Here we come to Waitara. (Song). I have only come to listen.

Wiremu Tamihana: Call, O friends. Yes; we come to Waitara, the name of which is heard in all parts of the Island. This Island has been overshadowed by war.

Hoani: Come to Waitara, where the people became divided, and thereafter some were pakehas and some were Maoris.

Hoani Pakea, of Wanganui, and Wetere, of Mokau, then spoke.

Matene te Whiwhi said: Greetings to you.

William King: Greetings to you, O Rewi. This party have come to sympathize with you, and to cry over the land. Take the cause of trouble, and bury it.

Rewi began his reply with a song, referring to the time of war which had passed. He said: Welcome to Waitara. I backed the people of Waitara in going to war, and thereupon trouble came