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NEW ZEALAND.

WAIKATO AND WAITARA NATIVE MEETINGS.

(REPORTS OF MEETINGS BETWEEN THE HON. THE PREMIER, AND THE HON. THE NATIVE MINISTER, AND NATIVES.)

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.[From the *Auckland Weekly News*, January 9.]

Alexandra, Friday night.

THE day was bright and fine : the previous night had looked cloudy and rain threatened. It would have been extremely unfortunate had wet weather come, as there is no shelter at the place of meeting. From this place there is a wide prospect, comprehending the mountains marking the boundaries of the southern portion of the Province of Auckland. Close beside us is the beautiful mountain of Pirongia, its forest-covered sides in gleaming and glooming light and shadow, as the soft clouds pass before the sun. Toward the Lower Waikato is Taupiri, overlooking the river as it passes through the gorge on its course to Mercer. To the north-east are the Piako Ranges, then the dominant mountain of the Thames Valley, Te Aroha, and still nearer Maungakawa, Maungatautari, and the Rangitoto Range. On a clear day the snowy peak of Ruapehu is visible, but to-day the horizon is clouded. From Pirongia, Mount Egmont, at Taranaki, can be seen.

The occasion was a great one ; probably such a gathering could not have been got together but for the fact that the Natives came to mourn over Takerei te Rau, a great chief of Waikato, who died a few weeks ago. But otherwise the Natives attach much importance to the event. Now comes to see them the man who has been most prominent in the history of New Zealand during their lives—the man who was the close friend of Potatau te Wherowhero, to whom they all look back with reverence, whose son is now their King ; the man who was known to so many who have now passed away. On our side the motives and wishes for the meeting are clear enough—the desire that there shall be established a good feeling between the two races ; that an asylum for murderers and criminals shall not be maintained ; that the threatening cloud which has hung so long over the North Island shall be dispelled for ever. What are the thoughts, feelings, and expectations of the Natives, it is difficult to surmise. They desire to preserve their race. Few feelings are so strong in men as that. Most of them desire to maintain amongst themselves some power separate from ours. They have no wish for war ; but probably none of the Kingites wish for such peace as would destroy their own autonomy.

After breakfast this morning a start was made for Te Kopua. Sir George Grey, Mr. Sheehan, Mr. Marshall Wood, Mr. Geach (an English barrister on a visit to this country) and Mr. Brown, M.H.R., went to where the large canoe of Lower Waikato was lying, and were rowed up the river. The remainder of the visitors, with about a hundred Natives, started on horseback, the party being in charge of Te Wheoro. The ride up the country was very enjoyable, and the Maoris made the pace very fast. After riding a few miles we came in sight of the multitudinous tents of the Kingites, pitched on a plain surrounded by undulating country. But, before riding up to the place of meeting, all those who went by land from Alexandra halted on a point where the Mangakurua River joins the Waipa, and, after waiting a few minutes, the big canoe was seen coming up, urged by the strong arms of about forty rowers. They had started an hour before us, but the current in the Waipa here is very strong. The river is tortuous, and there are several rapids. The approach of the canoe was a fine sight from where we sat on horseback, as it came swiftly rushing up the river, the men being incited by one of their rowing chaunts. Nini Kukutai stood in front, with another chief in the centre, and one in the stern, waving their arms and calling out like madmen. At this moment, one of the King's relatives rode down and called out to those in the canoe in a voice, which could be heard for miles, "Welcome, O Waikato, welcome!" On reaching a convenient place, Sir George Grey, Mr. Sheehan, and party left the canoe and walked about a quarter of a mile to where the Kingites were waiting. About two thousand were assembled, sitting in a semi-circle. About a hundred yards before reaching the first of the line, Manuhiri's daughter met us, with a long silver-headed staff. Some of the King's immediate friends followed her, and welcomed Sir George Grey ; but, as one occasion of the assemblage was to mourn for the death of Takerei te Rau, there was no joyous calling, or "powhiri," as it is called. We passed along the whole line in perfect silence till we came to nearly the end of it, where we were assembled the Ngatimahuta, the royal tribe, with Tawhiao, Manuhiri, and their families. Then Sir George Grey stopped, and the weeping commenced. I have heard a good many *tangis* in my time, but, judging of it merely as a performance, this was by far the best, the most impressive, and the most