

The police corps to be at the meeting is very efficient and strict. No one is allowed to take up spirits. A son of Purukutu was the chief of the patrol of police who stuck up Te Kooti, and took away his stock of spirits. It puzzles me to think where the Kingites get the money to buy the articles they possess. They are not selling lands, though it is reported here that settlers, supposed to be wealthy men in Auckland, have made large offers to them, and have obtained pledges to sell them some. The Kingites have, it is said, a considerable stock of powder safely stowed away.

Hikurangi (*viâ* Alexandra), Tuesday, 3 p.m., 7th May.

The reception has just concluded. It was by far the finest ceremony of the kind I have seen, and Sir George Grey says that he has never seen a larger gathering of Natives, except once at the Bay of Islands.

We left Alexandra at 10 o'clock, Sir George Grey and some of the party going up the Waipa for some miles in a canoe. The party who left Alexandra on horseback consisted of three or four Europeans and about thirty or forty Maoris. At Whakairoiro we found a number of Natives who had been sent on with the baggage. They at once left for Hikurangi, and the others waited for the canoe with Sir George. When all had assembled we must have numbered about 150 horsemen, besides fifty or sixty on foot. The fifteen or seventeen miles from Alexandra is over fertile country. There is a steep ascent just before getting to the settlement, and at the top of this were gathered the Lower Waikatos, who welcomed us—not in Maori style; that was left for the Kingites—but with a series of good “hip-hip-hurrahs!” Preceded by the Lower Waikatos, the horsemen formed two-and-two, and proceeded up the road.

The settlement of Hikurangi has been formed for about three years. It is on the edge of the bush, amongst broken ground. On the main tracks were ranged the Kingites, in splendid order, and the scene, as we rose up the hill, was really grand. All the women were well dressed, in prints of all colours, giving a picturesqueness and variety. When we came within hearing distance, the song of welcome was begun, and the war-dance. A good many of the men were armed with guns, and a number of shots were fired in welcome. It seemed that all the guns were double-barrelled. Several of the men were armed with swords of different patterns. There must have been 3,000 Maoris present and formed in line along the ridge. The welcome was a splendidly-managed affair. Marshals ran up and down the line regulating the dancing. We all paused, and the Europeans regretted that a photographer had not come to fix the scene, however imperfectly. The roads in the neighbourhood of the settlement have been greatly improved. Sideways have been cut on the hill-sides, so that we were able to ride up to where the people were gathered in several lines along the ridge. The Maoris then wheeled round, and marched before, two or three of the women standing by the grave of Takerei te Rau, which is surrounded by a good fence, wailing. Walking along the ridge we had a magnificent view of the whole plain of the Upper Waikato lying below us, bounded by the Thames Ranges in the distance, and by Maungatautari to the south. I presume there will be no speaking to-day. The Natives are now pitching the tents. We are likely to stay here for two days.

Wednesday morning, 8th May.

My last telegram was hurriedly written just at the conclusion of the reception ceremony, but there are few incidents which are worth while giving. These Native receptions have lately been described several times. Now, the present one was very much the same as the others, only larger, and better conducted than perhaps any that has taken place of late years. The Kingites were evidently determined to make a great show, and they succeeded. Lately, a strong body-guard has been formed, constantly to attend upon Tawhiao, and these men, who are all young fellows, played a prominent part in the reception. Purukutu, as general of the organized force, was conspicuous, with a bayonet fixed on a stick. Tawhiao was clothed in Maori fashion, with a feather head-dress. The visitors stopped in the middle of the main street of the settlement, on the top of the ridge, and Sir George Grey, who is not at all well, sat down on a stump of a tree. In a few minutes Tawhiao came back again dressed in European clothes, with a black coat and dark trousers. He was accompanied by Te Ngakau and one or two of the chief men. Sir George Grey and Tawhiao spoke for some minutes. The King is not looking well. I believe he has been ill for some time. The European visitors were marched up to the large house, and the tents were pitched upon a kind of terrace. A detachment of the King's police force was at once drawn up to keep all stragglers from the tents. Then we had the Church of England service by the Rev. Heta Tarawhiti, the Rev. W. Barton and Hame Ngarope being also present. The police force seemed a well-organized body. A certain number are always on duty, and there are regular reliefs every two hours.

A bugle blew at dark for the men whose turn it was for night-duty to assemble. When all had answered the roll-call, they marched through the settlement, and had prayers by themselves, and then mounted guard and told off patrols. The camp is very quiet, which is perhaps to be attributed to the prohibition of liquor in Hikurangi. The difference between the Kingites and the Maoris that Europeans are accustomed to see is very marked. The men and women are healthy-looking, while the number of children playing about, and of fine stout infants to be seen in the arms of their mothers, is remarkable. It is sad to think that those Natives who have least to do with Europeans are in every respect the best of their race; but so it is. It is sad for them, because the separation which at present exists cannot continue for ever; and how will it end? Tawhiao had tea with Sir George Grey, and afterwards Sir George visited Manuhiri and one or two of the principal men. Previous to this several hundreds of baskets of potatoes, kumaras, and other food had been brought by the women and lads and laid before the tents of the Europeans. This was divided in the usual manner; the Europeans took what they wanted, and the Natives consumed the rest. Two pigs were given, and a bullock was drawn along on a cart; but probably your readers will care little for a description of life at Hikurangi, but will be anxious to know if anything is likely to result from these meetings and salutations. That is the important point for the country. The speaking has not yet begun, so very little can be said except by way of giving gossip.

Tawhiao is a very silent man, and Sir George Grey and Mr. Sheehan also keep their own counsel. I have heard it said that Tawhiao has an idea of asking back Waikato, with the intention of taking as much as he could get, the second condition to be that a treaty should be made pledging