

the Government to allow no more land to be leased or bought by Europeans from the Natives; the King's authority to be recognized by the Government; and an amnesty to be issued for all past offences. These conditions I merely give as the ideas of those who converse with Tawhiao, but probably they are founded a good deal on surmise.

Although Rewi has not attended the meeting, still there is no idea that he is inclined to desert the King. The Natives have still the notion that there should be an investigation into the whole circumstances of the war by some impartial authority, who should declare who was right and who was wrong, and they confidently believe that they would come out of such an investigation with flying colours. The second of the above-mentioned conditions is, of course, out of the question, and the conclusion would be that we had better leave the whole thing as it stands than agree to a treaty that no more land is to be bought from the Natives. The war was inevitable when the Maoris declared that there should be no European settlement south of the Maungatawhiri, and the same difficulty will arise again. There are Natives willing to sell land which they claim as their own, and to make a treaty by which Tawhiao would have power to prevent such transactions would be absurd. I have heard it said that a railway and road might be allowed through the country, but of course there would be no use in making them if the country were to remain in the hands of the Maoris. Ministers must of course consider what is just and fair, add what would be confirmed by Parliament. But, in any event, the results of the war must not be questioned. If it were proposed to return to them Waikato, the land on the left bank of the Waipa, so as to come back to their own country, and leave the Ngatimaniapoto their own land, the settlers of Waikato would strongly object; besides, there is the danger that the Ngatimaniapoto might take up the King movement, and prevent all land sales. We would then be worse off than ever. Tawhiao and the Waikatos have no land left worth mentioning, and, unless they were to get land somewhere else, it is not their interest to change the present state of affairs. If Tawhiao were to relinquish his position as King he would obtain no benefit by the sale of land. His position has been greatly weakened by the secession from his authority of the tribes of Tauranga and the Thames and nearly the whole of the Ngatirauk was, and if the Government could only get the Ngatimaniapoto to follow suit a great step would be taken. Perhaps some of your readers may be surprised at the frequency of these big meetings amongst the Kingites, having apparently no definite object. A great many causes contributed to the holding of these meetings. They are the means by which the chiefs, and men aiming at wide influence, attain their object and make their power and celebrity known beyond their own settlements. Then these gatherings are our public meetings, and our theatres, circuses, dancing assemblies, and concerts rolled into one. For the last few weeks all the women have been preparing their best dresses to make a show at the gathering at Hikurangi, and at these meetings the girls have an opportunity of seeing the young men of distant *kaingas* and *vice versa*. I believe that the political elements are not the first consideration for the majority of those present.

Noon.

The scene at the distribution of food was something to be remembered. About a couple of hundred men and women marched up from the cook-house with baskets of food. The design of the Kingites was to put before Sir George Grey and the other visitors specimens of the ancient food of the Maoris. Twenty or thirty came in front of those carrying the baskets. They were all naked, except a breech cloth, and they danced, and turned up their eyes in a frightful style. Purukutu led with a long spear, gesticulating violently, and the whole sang an old chant, of which the following is a rough translation:—

We bring the fruits of *Tu*—
• We bring the fruits of *Rongo*—
Both of them—

We bring the *hakeke*, which clings to the tree; and
We bring the *pohue*, which spreads under the ground.

I may say that *Tu* is the god of war, and by "the fruits of *Tu*" is meant human flesh, which made a feature in ancient great feasts. *Rongo* is the god of vegetables. The *hakeke* is a fungus, and the *pohue* is a root. The food in the baskets consisted of *mamaku*, the stem of the large fern baked; of *para*, a fern (*Marattia fraxinea*); of *pohue*, the root of the wild convolvulus; of *roi*, the fern-root. The Natives, having placed down the baskets, chanted a song relating to each kind of food, and then retired.

3 p.m.

Nothing has been done to-day beyond lounging and feasting. Tawhiao is in good spirits, and so are the Natives. The speaking will commence to-morrow. From this place can be seen Hamilton, Cambridge, and a vast extent of the country from which the Waikatos were driven by the war. Probably one object in its selection as a settlement was its easy defence against attack, and it certainly offers a splendid position. Some of the European visitors sang English songs to-day, and made rough translations.

From good authority amongst the Natives I hear that Tawhiao will to-morrow put forward certain proposals for a settlement of all matters between the races. It is said he will not at present ask for Waikato back. Ministers will no doubt say frankly that the results of the war must be adhered to, and, unless the demands of Tawhiao are preposterous, will take time to consider them. Unless the demands of Tawhiao are beyond all reason, his stating them will open the door for future negotiations, and the matter may well be left there.

Rewi has not arrived, and probably will not do so now.

Bundles of telegrams arrive to the Ministers every day, and a good part of their time is occupied in answering them.

Alexandra (*viâ* Hikurangi), Wednesday evening, 8th May.

Shakespeare says, "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown," and I suppose the proverb is true in Maoridom as elsewhere. Guards are always mounted round Tawhiao's house, and the men are armed with loaded muskets. When he walks about, also, he is always attended by one or two of his guards. Who the Maoris are afraid of I do not know; but the respect and reverence they show to Tawhiao is surprising, and militates against any expectation that they will desert or depose him. Their