

The Natives were mustered by the ringing of a bell.

A new Union Jack was hoisted in the centre of the village, on a flagstaff specially erected for the occasion.

The Natives assembled in the hall to the number of about three hundred.

Arama Karaka opened the proceedings by giving out a hymn, which was sung by all present in the Maori language.

Prayer was then offered up for the success of the Conference.

Arama Karaka then delivered a brief sermon.

Paora Tuhaere then read the following opening speech :—

[*Translation.*]

Welcome to the chiefs of the different districts, who are invited once more to meet together and to listen to the farewell words handed down by your ancestors—but who, alas! have been removed from our sight for ever—that so the words spoken by them may be revived and remembered afresh by us, and by those who may come after us. It is now thirty-nine years since the Treaty of Waitangi was signed, including the time at which the great Conference of chiefs was held at Kohimarama, presided over by Governor Browne, who was then the Governor of New Zealand, when the articles of that treaty were repeated and confirmed by him, as the Queen's representative, in the presence of your elders and friends, who, as I have said before, have gone to their long rest. It is with a view to bring those words to living remembrance that they have been submitted on this occasion for your consideration, and for the benefit of your children after you; having failed on my own part to understand the real intent and meaning of the terms of that Treaty.

No other object, however, is in view than that of truly comprehending its details on behalf of our children and successors hereafter, who, I feel assured, do not understand it aright. It will be well, therefore, for the chiefs of this assembly to consider carefully the words which were delivered by Governor Browne at the great Conference which took place at Kohimarama. Let me read them aloud to you, and then let each member of this assembly think over well in his own mind the points of the question now put before you. Special occasion has been taken to revive these things, inasmuch as Sir George Grey and Mr. Sheehan have assumed the reins of government in the interests of both European and Native races, so that the people throughout these Islands may witness these our deliberations; and I trust at the same time that our friends of the Ngapuhi tribes, by whom the treaty was first signed, will not think this an attempt on our part to take from them that to which they have a prior and a better claim.

It is with the spirit only of the Treaty of Waitangi we now wish to deal. A word for our Maori member now sitting in the Colonial Parliament may also be in season, for those especially who are without energy to bring these things into life and activity.

To remedy this defect it is recommended that for the future members for each Native district should be chosen and returned by an assembly such as the one I am now addressing, whose vote shall make the only good and true election.

Finally, I wish to bring before you the invitations which have been sent round, inviting the chiefs, with the Europeans, to attend our important meeting at Te Kopua, on the Waipa, Waikato. There also will your new and younger kinsman, Tawhiao (the Maori King), and Sir George Grey meet together. The chiefs of this assembly should also go, and should be present to hear and assist in the arrangements which may then be proposed and made on either side for the general good of the country and people.

The chief, Paora Tuhaere, then read in Maori the following speech, delivered by His Excellency Governor Browne at the Kohimarama Conference, on the 10th July, 1860:—

My friends, chiefs of New Zealand,—

1. I have invited you to meet me on the present occasion, that we may have an opportunity of discussing various matters connected with the welfare and advancement of the two races dwelling in New Zealand.

2. I take advantage of it also to repeat to you, and, through you, to the whole Maori people, the assurances of goodwill on the part of our gracious Sovereign which have been given by each succeeding Governor, from Governor Hobson to myself.

3. On assuming the sovereignty of New Zealand, Her Majesty extended to her Maori subjects her Royal protection, engaging to defend New Zealand and the Maori people from all aggression by any foreign power, and imparting to them all the rights and privileges of British subjects; and she confirmed and guaranteed to the chiefs and tribes of New Zealand, and to the respective families and individuals thereof, the full, exclusive, and undisturbed possession of their lands and estates, forests, fisheries, and other properties which they may collectively or individually possess, so long as it is their wish to retain the same in their possession.

4. In return for these advantages, the chiefs who signed the Treaty of Waitangi ceded for themselves and their people to Her Majesty the Queen of England, absolutely and without reservation, all the rights and powers of sovereignty which they collectively or individually possessed, or might be supposed to exercise or possess.

5. Her Majesty has instructed the Governors who preceded me, and she will instruct those who come after me, to maintain the stipulations of this treaty inviolate, and to watch over the interests and promote the advancement of her subjects without distinction of race.

6. Having renewed these assurances in the name of our gracious Sovereign, I now ask you to confer with me frankly and without reserve. If you have grievances, make them known to me, and if they are real I will try to redress them. Her Majesty's wish is, that all her subjects should be happy, prosperous, and contented. If, therefore, you can make any suggestions for the better protection of property, the punishment of offenders, the settlement of disputes, or the preservation of peace, I shall gladly hear them, and will give them the most favourable consideration.

7. The minds of both races have lately been agitated by false reports or exaggerated statements,