

Library, and again had for neighbour the Mines Committee. Here it remained till the fire took place in 1907; then it sat for two years in the Museum, and then in the small, inconvenient room that it was just leaving, which room was on the site of the old lobby. There was a tradition that they never had party fights in the Native Affairs Committee; but in the old days, especially when the late Mr. Seddon was alive, they had strenuous fights, though not always party ones. He remembered one session, early in the present century, in which the Government wanted to put through a clause relating to timber leases—an extremely knotty subject. This clause was strongly opposed, not only by Opposition members, but also by Government supporters, and a sort of stonewall took place. Mr. Carroll (as he was then) told the late Mr. Seddon that he would not be able to get the clause through, and Mr. Seddon, who was a member of the Committee, said that he would settle the matter. Mr. Seddon therefore attended the next meeting and lectured the Committee, and told them to put the clause through. All his lecturing, however, had no effect—so he retired in disgust. In the end a compromise was effected by which the clause was modified and timber was classed as a “usufruct”—a word suggested by Mr. Skerrett, which no one knew the effect of, and it therefore satisfied every one. While this contest was going on a similar contest was raging in the Mines Committee next door, where the redoubtable Mr. “Roddy” McKenzie was opposing Mr. McGowan, the then Minister of Mines. Mr. Moss, the member for Ohinemuri and the speaker were members of both Committees, and it was arranged that Mr. Moss would look after the mines while he looked after the Natives, and whenever he wanted a vote he would knock on the partition, and Mr. Moss would come in and give his vote, and *vice versa* when a vote was required in the Mines Committee. The Hon. Sir James Carroll would also remember the dramatic resignation of their Chairman on one occasion, and would also remember the fracas that took place when a dissatisfied petitioner got into the committee-room and assaulted Sir James, and was promptly thrown out by the younger members of the Committee. It was popularly believed that the Committee opened proceedings every day not by prayer, but with a *haka*. He could assure the audience that that was not the case. There were, certainly, traditions which were still maintained, though perhaps not in their pristine vigour. The Committee was certainly the hardest-worked in the House, and was looked on by the Natives as their Parliament to which they could all appeal to right their grievances. It was certainly, as far as Native matters were concerned, the highest Court in the land. One legal gentleman once had the temerity to appeal to the Committee against a judgment of the Privy Council: the Committee, however, drew the line at this. The result of the labours of the Committee was seen in the annual “washing-up” Bill; and, now that members of the House knew that all evil spirits had been exorcised from the room, he had no doubt they would accept all “washing-up” Bills in the future without question. No other Committee of the House could make a similar claim. He believed that on the blank spaces of the walls scenes depicting the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi were going to be painted. This treaty was the palladium of the Maori people. It was one of the shortest ever signed, but it was one of the most important, and was pregnant with great possibilities for the good of both the pakeha and the Maori. He heartily congratulated the architect on the designing of the room, and the carvers on the way in which they had carried out the work of decoration. The Committee had now a home, which he hoped would be permanent, in which they could store their archives without fear of destruction by fire. He had to thank those present for listening to him so patiently.

SYMBOLIC CARVINGS.

The Chairman, who said the carvings had a symbolic purpose, then called upon Mr. ELDON BEST (Government Ethnologist, Dominion Museum), who stated that the principal features in the carvings were grotesque human figures, and a peculiar-looking figure having a weird body and a head something like that of a bird. This figure, appearing in profile, was very prominent in Maori carvings, and was known as the *manaia*. There was no doubt that all the figures in the carvings were symbolic of something or other; but, unfortunately, they dated back so far that the Maoris had forgotten what they represented. In some cases they saw the single *manaia* facing outwards, and sometimes the double *manaia* figures, with a human figure between, and with the beaks of the *manaia* on either side touching the ears—sometimes the shoulders—of the human figure between them. In the carvings of western Melanesia they often saw the human figure, not so conventionalized as in the Maori carvings, with a distinct bird on either side, with the beaks at each ear of the human figure. The same figures were seen in the stone sculptures of Java; and passing on to India we would find perhaps the origin of the double *manaia* in the figure of Vishnu, with the *garuda*, or bird, on either side with its beak in the ear of the figure. These two birds represented the qualities of good and evil, each of which was addressing the god, as it were, very much like the system of party government. In Indian teaching the good eventually prevailed over the bad.

THE BANQUET.

A banquet was afterwards given by the Native Affairs Committee in the old temporary chamber of the House of Representatives, the Native Minister (the Hon. J. G. Coates) presiding over a large attendance.

The usual loyal toast having been duly honoured, the Prime Minister gave the toast of “The Native Race,” coupled with the names of Mr. Tau Henare, M.P., and Mr. Wi Hapi. He had had great pleasure, said Mr. Massey, in attending the important ceremony that had taken place that morning, and he believed that in the times to come it would be regarded as historical. He hoped that the work done in the new committee-room would be for the benefit of the Maori race and the Europeans, and of the community as a whole. We were all proud and fond of our Native race. That was no mere lip sentiment. He noticed returns of population, for example, were often given in this form: “Popula-