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NEW ZEALAND.

MAORI CONFERENCE AT PUTIKI.

REPORT ON CONFERENCE OF MAORI REPRESENTATIVES HELD AT PUTIKI, WANGANUI,
DURING EASTER WEEK, 1927.

Presented to the House of Representatives by leave.

Parliament Buildings, Wellington, 12th September, 1928.

The Right Hon. J. G. COATES, Prime Minister and Native Minister, Wellington.

DEAR SIR,—

We have the honour to submit for your consideration a report on the conference of Maori representatives held at Putiki, Wanganui, during Easter week, 1927. We recommend that the report be made a parliamentary paper during the present session.

Yours faithfully,
A. T. NGATA.
M. POMARE.

REPORT

OF WANGANUI MAORI CONFERENCE HELD AT PUTIKI, WANGANUI,
EASTER WEEK, 1927.

THE opportunity offered by the annual tournament of the newly affiliated New Zealand Maori Lawn-tennis Association held at Wanganui during the Easter week of 1927 was seized by the Young Maori Party, in co-operation with the organizers of the tournament, to hold a conference on matters affecting the Maori race generally. A full generation had elapsed since the party, then organized as the Te Aute Students' Association, held its conference at Putiki in 1900. In the interval the former leaders of Maori thought had passed away. Few opportunities had occurred of inter-tribal meetings; the younger men had lost touch with one another; other movements of a political and religious character had arisen and crossed the path of progress. There was need for establishing new lines of communication between those interested in the welfare of the race and of organizing and co-ordinating all progressive movements.

The Maori tennis tournament held at Rotorua during the Easter of 1926 brought together some of the finest representatives of the race—men and women who had made their mark in the Civil Service, in commerce, in farming, in health service, in the Church, and in other professions. There was remarked, as at the Tikitiki meeting a month earlier, a physical vigour and mental alertness, a greater ease in the modern environment, that betokened the immense progress made by the race in the last generation.

For those who attended the Rotorua meeting the Wanganui fixture was a pleasant and instructive reunion. A conference of young Maori representatives was made a special feature, so that the twofold appeal of sport and the conference on racial questions brought together some of the most progressive elements in the race.

At the opening of the tennis tournament on the morning of Saturday, the 16th April, and at the formal reception to the visitors the same evening welcoming addresses given by Mr. Pownall (president of the Wanganui Lawn-tennis Association), Mr. Veitch, M.P., the Rev. Mr. Patterson, Mr. Gibbons (then Mayor of Wanganui), and Mr. Barton, S.M., and replies by the Hon. Sir Maui Pomare and the Hon. A. T. Ngata sounded notes of seriousness and appreciation of the importance of the gathering of the youth of the tribes. The feature emphasized was that such meetings would tend to break down tribal barriers, and promote healthy, social, and intellectual intercourse between the young leaders of the various tribes. The race had reached a stage in its development now when young men, not soured by past tribal grievances, must get together and gather into a coherent, conscious organization the fragmentary progressive attempts made by the Maori to fit himself into his present environment. Sir Maui Pomare and Mr. Ngata defined the present position of the Maori people and recounted the successive steps that had been adopted for its betterment. The leaven of progress had been steadily at work, and, when reviewed along all lines, the development had been remarkable. Physically there was abundant evidence of a wonderful improvement. Apart from the statistics of the last census, no