

No. 42.

Mr. E. M. WILLIAMS, R.M., to the UNDER SECRETARY Native Department.

Resident Magistrate's Office,

SIR,—

Waimate, Bay of Islands, May 16th, 1870.

I have the honor to forward for your information the following particulars of the Native Meeting held at Waima, in celebration of the removal of Arama Karaka Pi's bones, a ceremony called by the Natives a "Hahunga."

Arriving at Waima on the evening of the 11th instant, I found the Natives already assembled in very large numbers, the Rarawa, 300 strong, having landed and encamped for the night on the banks of the river, about two miles below the general camp.

On approaching Hariata's (Arama Karaka Pi's widow) residence, the first object which attracted our attention was a formidable wall of potatoes, 400 yards long, containing 4,500 kits, neatly arranged in readiness for delivery. A hearty welcome in the true Maori style greeted our arrival at our quarters for the night.

In the morning all was bustle and preparation for the reception of the Rarawa, who, when they appeared, were received with the usual honors, the war-dance being given and returned by the respective parties. Then followed the ceremony of placing cooked food before the visitors; this was carried by a large party of women dressed in their best attire, waving white handkerchiefs as they marched along, and chanting their usual songs of welcome; a compliment which was soon afterwards returned by the Rarawa; their men and women carrying in the same manner a large supply of cooked food, and placing it before Ngapuhi. The remainder of the day was taken up in arranging and apportioning off, the enormous quantity of uncooked provisions provided for this meeting.

Soon after daylight on the 13th, a volley of musketry announced that the bones had been removed from the vault in which Arama Karaka's body had been placed; and about an hour afterwards the party were seen approaching amidst the cries of "haeremai," the wailing of women and firing of guns, the widow herself carrying on her back the bones of her husband and child, which were placed in a small hut prepared for their reception.

The scene was an imposing and affecting one; and throughout the forenoon the excitement was kept up by successive arrivals of women; each hapu in turn sending their women to cry over the bones, and each party making way for the other as they approached; the largest party being from the Rarawa, headed by Te Tai's wife. In the afternoon there was a general muster for the war dance given to the Rarawa, who did not themselves join in it, and although the whole force did not respond to the call, yet the numbers actually engaged in this dance were estimated at between 800 and 1000 men. After the dance, speeches were delivered by some of the principal chiefs, both Ngapuhi and Rarawa, all of a friendly nature, encouraging unanimity and support of the law. The remainder of the day, and indeed, the whole night, was spent in "kanikani," a native dance of a peculiar character, performed by the tread of the foot accompanied with various motions of the hands and arms, in which, like all their other performances, most excellent time was kept, to the tones of a chant, responded to in chorus by all the performers, the principal part of whom were women.

The last, though by no means the least interesting scene in the programme was enacted on the morning of the 14th, by about 100 women wearing wreaths of weeping willow and ferns, carrying in each hand a wisp of the same, going through the same actions as in the "kanikani," marching slowly towards the hut in which the bones were placed, and there simultaneously bursting forth into a piteous wail for the dead. This ceremony is called by the natives the "keka."

The following is as near as I could estimate the number of natives present, and the amount of provisions supplied at this feast:—

Number of Natives	...	...	...	2500
Potatoes	...	...	...	4500 kits
Pigs	...	...	...	200
Sheep	...	...	...	10
Flour	...	...	...	10 tons
Sugar	...	...	...	2 "
Biscuit	...	...	...	1 "
Tobacco	...	...	...	500 lbs
Kao dried Kumara	...	...	...	100 kits

About sixty Europeans were present, several from Waimate and Pakaraka, and almost the entire white population of Hokianga, all of whom experienced the greatest attention, beds being provided, and meals served up in European style, in Hariata's house, receiving also their share of the "kauika" (stack of provisions) three separate lots of which, when being told off, were announced by the crier as for the pakehas.

During my stay at this place I had an opportunity of visiting and conversing with the chiefs at their different encampments, and from the tenor of their remarks feel convinced of their attachment to the Government, and general desire for improvement. They expressed themselves much pleased with the late visit which his Excellency the Governor had paid them, regretting that he could not have so timed that visit as to have been present with them at Waima.

I should perhaps, be extending this report beyond the limits of an official dispatch were I to enter too minutely into the many interesting incidents which occurred at this meeting or give *verbatim* the names of all the chiefs who were present; the whole district, both Ngapuhi and Rarawa, being represented by their respective chiefs: but I cannot refrain from remarking in reference to this meeting that, a more interesting one has never taken place, the utmost cordiality and good feeling having been manifested throughout, attributable in a great measure to the firmness with which Moses Tawhai opposed the introduction of spirits into Waima, neither wine, beer, or spirits being allowed in the place, which prohibition was strictly observed, both by Natives and Europeans.