

"Another aged chief, after a long pause, came forward and delivered himself after the like fashion. He was succeeded by a man in the prime of life, with a coloured handkerchief bound round his head and over one eye. In his hands he held an implement of peace—the familiar hair-broom—and as he ran up and down the *marae* brandishing this domestic weapon and delivering his speech in short passages, every time he came to a full stop in front of us he certainly cut a ludicrous figure. He was effusive in his speech of welcome. After this orator came the prophet of the village, Te Kerei, who was brief and oracular, as became his priestly rôle.

"Topia and Mr. Carroll spoke in reply, Mr. Carroll holding in his hands a lady's parasol, so that the badges displayed on both sides—broom and sunshade—were eminently peaceful in their significance.

*"Address by the Premier."*

"Finally the Premier spoke (interpreted by the Hon. Mr. Carroll). He said he could scarcely find words in which to express his pleasure at being there that day. This reception more than repaid him for the distance he had come with their respected chief Topia to meet them. He was determined that justice should be done to both races. The course adopted in the past had not been productive of good to the Maori race. He saw there that day only the remnant of a great people now fast passing away. He was there in furtherance of a desire to avert that evil. Next session would be one of the most important as affecting the Maori race that had ever been held. It was the desire of the pakeha to preserve the great race that formerly held and owned this country. In the early days, when the Maoris were as numerous as the ferns on the hillside, and the pakehas few and powerless, the Maoris stretched out the hand of fellowship to them. Now that the pakehas were as plentiful as the fern, it was their turn to reciprocate that friendship. This they would do in a practical way. Hitherto the Natives had been parting with their lands in a manner which only tended to impoverish them. He was travelling through the country meeting the Natives face to face, so that they might open their minds to him, and so that they might freely state their wants and wishes. When he had ascertained their minds he would be able to decide what remedy to apply. The best way in which the Government could help them was in respect to their lands, so dealing with these that the Maori might be again placed in the proud position which he occupied when the pakeha first came to the colony. He saw a great many little children, and he wished to observe that this rising generation must be cared for by the Government, because the pledge was solemnly given when the Treaty of Waitangi was signed that the Government would attend to the education of the Native children. If their parents allowed them to go to school and mix with the European children, both races would grow up in peace and harmony, both having a fair share of the soil upon which to live. If they asked that day for a school to be established in their midst he would do his best to accomplish that object for them. Ample land must be reserved for the use of the Natives. A plan might be devised whereby the Europeans could use the surplus lands of the Maoris, and the Maoris themselves and their children be protected against want for all time. If he could take them up in a balloon and pass over the land between there and Hawera he could teach them by an object-lesson what good had been achieved already in this way. The returned confiscated lands had been leased for the Natives. Two years ago they received £7,000 in rentals from these lands, and last year these rentals had risen to £14,000. In conclusion, the Premier alluded to the presence in the Ministry of one of their own race (Mr. Carroll), and said that he himself accepted the position of Native Minister because he recognised the paramount importance of settling the Native question. At present in everything relating to Native matters the motto was '*Taihoa!*'—procrastination and delay prevailed everywhere. Both Natives and Europeans were like the lion enmeshed in the net, and he hoped to be the mouse that would liberate the lion from its toils.

"Shortly after 3 o'clock the oratory came to an end, and Natives and Europeans addressed themselves with sharpened appetites to the very substantial and well-cooked meal of roast pork, boiled potatoes and kumeras, bread, biscuit, and tea.

"When Pipiriki was regained, at 7 o'clock, every one admitted that this day was a day to be marked with a white stone in the calendar of our memories.

That night at Pipiriki the Premier and the Hon. Mr. Carroll discussed the question of establishing a township at Pipiriki and opening a school there for the education of European and Native children. The Natives expressed a strong desire to have this course adopted.

Another important matter discussed the same evening was the obstruction on the Wanganui River by the Natives. Both the Premier and the Hon. Mr. Carroll pointed out to those interested that the proper line to adopt would be to consult the Government, so that a reasonable understanding might be arrived at. The Natives were informed in very plain language that they must not take the law into their own hands, as the country would not tolerate such a line of procedure.

"Next day we reached Ohakune from Pipiriki. Stayed there a night, picked up the Central-line route, and travelled through the Waimarino Block, and for the next three days were travelling from morn till eve on horseback, chiefly through forest. For that space of time we were practically dead to the outer world, and yet it was a pleasant time. For the first four miles our course lay through Rangitane Block, which has a total area of 2,000 acres. The lower end has been taken up in small grazing-runs by settlement associations. The grazing ground is all occupied, and a few of the association settlers are also on land. Then we enter the Waimarino Block proper, and never leave it again until we reach Taumarunui. The portions of this block assigned to the associations from Marton, Bulls, and Wanganui are already settled. The land selected by other associations is now being surveyed.

"About noon we descend by a narrow shelf of road to the depths of the steep ravine, at the foot of which stands Makatuhe Bridge, comprising three 63ft. and five 20ft. spans. This bridge was erected at a cost of about £2,000 in a place where it was never required, and now is familiarly