

A NATIVE CALL OF WELCOME

Awataha (Waitemata),

Auckland, February 27, 1915.

FRIENDS,—Greetings from us, the Maori people residing in this part of our island of Te Ika-a-maui, residing in these parts beside the waters of Waitemata in the homes of our ancestry. Greetings to you!

We have had conveyed to us the notification of the travelling of our Bishop to visit the tribes in distant parts to the south and to the north—Te Rerenga-Wairua; we await his visit to us who live where the sound of his voice is heard nearby. The reason of this letter to you is the request of our European friends to write to you in order that you may have the explanation of an ancestral Maori proverb—that the same may be published and made known to the European people. That is to say, the proverb, or call of welcome, uttered of old, and still the *pouhiri* or call of welcome to visitors. The words as printed are correct, and the words mean:

Come hither, O strangers from afar!
My youngest child has brought you hither
From beyond the distant horizon,
And conducted you hitherward. Welcome!

The meaning of the words is now made clear so that all may understand.

Now, this is the origin of this proverb, which it is correct for us here at Awataha to explain, for it was uttered by one of our ancestors of Hauraki, of that section of our people of these parts known as Ngati-paoa. For we of these parts, who are well versed in ancestral history, claim descent and connection with Ngati-paoa, though our land rights and tribal rights are independent of Ngati-paoa. Paoa was a chief of olden times, and famed among all Waikato, Kaipara, Waitemata, and Hauraki. He resided at Piako, from whence his fame spread, and the chiefs of the above districts vied in their desire to out-do one another in lavishing their hospitality on Paoa, when he came to visit them. From a place came an invitation to Paoa and his people to visit them at Te Ruawehea—for war was not always going on among the tribes, and in periods of peace the interchange of visits between great chiefs was the usual thing. So in due course, Paoa and his retinue of chiefs came to visit the tribes at Te Ruawehea. It was then that this song of welcome was sung by the people of Ruawehea under the chieftainess, Tukutuku, who composed it. She claimed relationship to Paoa as a younger relative, hence the words of the song. On the arrival of Paoa and his people at Te Ruawehea a great feast was held, for all the tribes of Waitemata and Hauraki were gathered there. This gathering was famed in after times and is still called the *Pao-tukuhiri* (scented with sweet-smelling tawhiri). Tukutuku having caused a large carved house to be built to accommodate the visitors, which was called by that name. From this meeting is traced much tribal history of these parts, and hence the welcome song of Tukutuku has been preserved to memory, and is now sung in welcoming distinguished chiefs and Europeans to tribal gatherings.

Though this explanation be lengthy, do not abridge its publication, for it is right we should fully explain it. Ngapuhi of the north are also our relations, but they may have forgotten the history of the song, or, as is Maori custom, prefer to leave the nearer relatives to explain anything affecting the ancestral proverbs of other tribes.

That is all our words.

Hoping your paper will continue to make known to the Catholic peoples the wants and doings of your Maori people, from NOKA HUKANUI, AND FROM ALL US LIVING IN THIS PLACE AT AWATAHA, AT WAITEMATA.

Reefton

Rev. Father Galerne is to be commended for the attention he has devoted to the schools, by providing

for the comfort and convenience of the pupils (writes the Reefton correspondent of the *Grey River Argus*). The girls' primary school building newly completed is 81 feet long and 20 feet wide inside measurement, and is divided by a removable partition. The western side of the building has six long side lights, providing abundance of light; and is a model of what a schoolroom should be. The convent, high school, girls' school, and boys' school are erected on sites having a combined area of four or five acres, all in one block. During the past few years Father Galerne has been active in erecting churches in addition to the schools. These include those at Ikamatua and Cronadun, whilst the erection of another is under consideration. Mr. C. O'Donnell, who has had charge of the work, is to be complimented on the manner in which he has carried it out.

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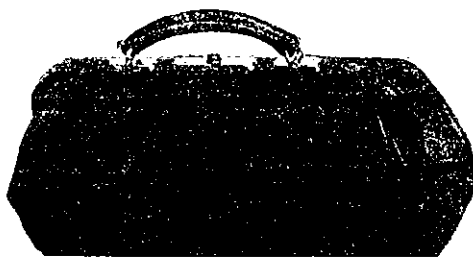
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