

# The Sacking of KAIAPOHIA PA

*On Sunday afternoon, October 25, and on Monday, October 26 (beginning at 10.30), 3YA will carry out special broadcasts on relay of commemorative services and celebrations in connection with the centenary of the sacking of the Kaiapohia pa by Te Rauparaha. Distinguished visitors will be present at the functions, one of which will be the opening of a new fence, built to represent the old palisade, on the site of the original defensive works. This ceremony will be performed by his Excellency the Governor-General, Lord Bledisloe.*

**D**RIVE through Kaiapoi to-day, carry straight on up the Main North Road to the memorial marking the site of the old Kaiapohia Pa, which, exactly 100 years ago, was sacked and burned by Te Rauparaha, the fierce northern chief; or turn off and drive through Tuahiwi, and you will find the inhabitants pursuing their peaceful lives surrounded by rich, fertile country, well ordered and kept.

Little can be seen to recall the stirring days preceding 1831. No casual observer would realise that fearless Maori warriors fought and died in hundreds over this very ground—the Ngai-Tahu defending their pa, the Ngatitoa and other tribes under Te Rauparaha seemingly avenging the killing of some of their chiefs but, in reality, endeavouring to subdue the Ngai-Tahu and wrest from them their wealth.

Still living at Tuahiwi are descendants of the great chiefs of the Ngai-Tahu, who, under Turakautahi, founded and settled the Kaiapohia Pa about the year 1700. They represent the seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth generations, and are at present organising the centenary celebrations of the evacuation of the pa, to be held from October 24 to 26, when Maoris from every part of New Zealand will forgather at one of the largest hui ever held, and the first centenary celebration Maori history knows.

From a strategic point of view, the site of Kaiapohia—a tract of land about ten acres in extent, jutting out into a lagoon—could scarcely have been better chosen. The Lagoon, Tai-rutu by name, was, in turn, surrounded by vast areas of swamp and offered protection and practical immunity from attack on three sides. The land side, which covered the south end, was guarded by high earthworks—the remains of which can be seen to-day—outside of which were erected strong wooden palisades that extended right round the pa. Behind the earth-wall was a double row of palisades. The fortifications were completed by the erection of a high watch-tower at the south end, and the pa was deemed impregnable.

In a spirit of revenge for insults and fired by avarice on account of the greenstone treasures which the Ngai-Tahu possessed, Te Rauparaha decided to attack the pa.

Despite Te Rauparaha's protestations of friendliness, the Kaiapohians were rightly suspicious, and they killed eight chiefs who had entered the pa. Te Rauparaha went back to Kapiti and planned revenge. Three years later he came again.

After a siege of three months, and during which time he realised the futility of a frontal attack, Te Rauparaha conceived the scheme of firing the wooden palisades. Three parallel trenches, constructed in zig-zag fashion, were dug up to the foot of the stockade, and bundles of manuka scrub were gathered. As soon as there was sufficient scrub for the purpose, the bundles were carried up the trenches and placed

one on top of the other at the foot of the palisade. The daring of this operation was magnificent as the warriors engaged in it were exposed to the deadly fire of the

Ngai-Tahu. Notwithstanding the enormous loss of life, the piles of scrub grew higher and higher.

As the work progressed, the dreadful significance of it became impressed upon the occupants of the pa, and various methods of escape from the impending disaster were attempted. One night, Taiaroa, with the force he brought from the Peninsula, withdrew from the stronghold, with the object of attacking the northerners from outside, and so creating a diversion. He was, however, destined never to do so.

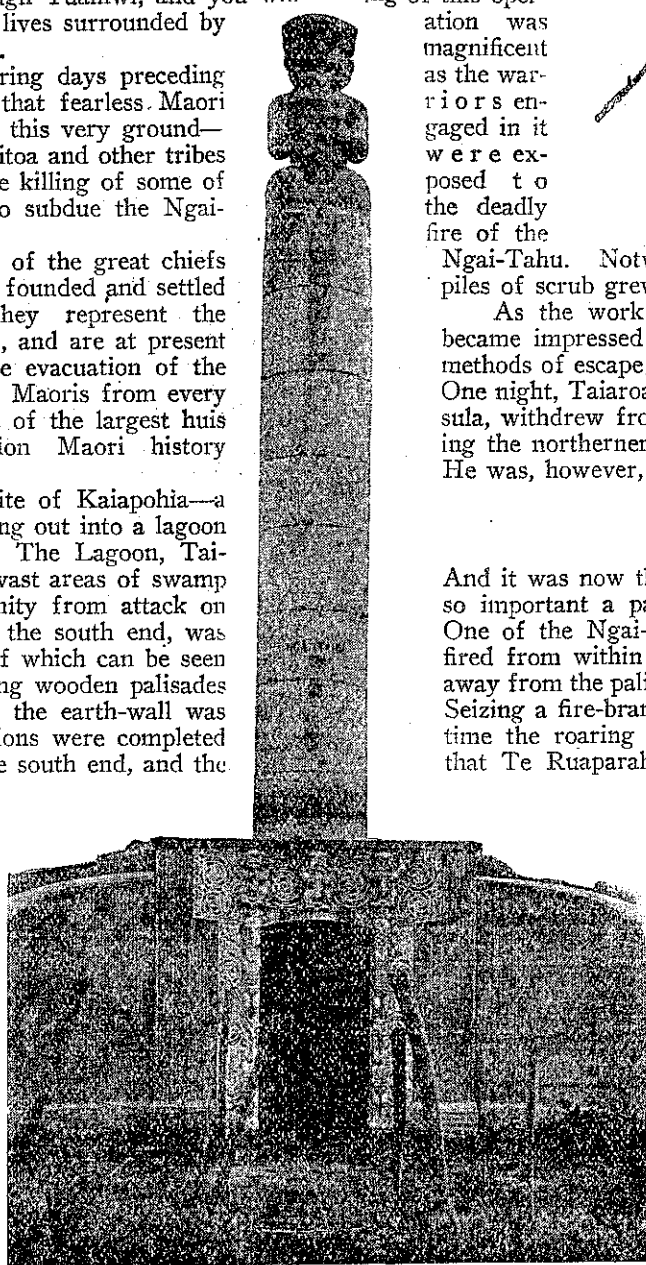
**A**T last, after feverish suspense, the fatal day dawned. A nor'-wester sprang up. And it was now that the vagaries of Canterbury winds played so important a part in the success of Te Rauparaha's plan. One of the Ngai-Tahu chiefs decided that if the scrub were fired from within the prevailing wind would carry the flames away from the palisades, and so thwart the northerners' chances. Seizing a fire-brand, he thrust it into the dry scrub, and in no time the roaring flames rose high. It appeared for a while that Te Rauparaha's final effort to sack the stronghold was going to prove as futile as his previous attempt.

But at this juncture, as in so many others of his eventful life, Te Rauparaha's characteristic good fortune did not desert him. While his men were being mown down under the galling musketry of the enemy, the wind swung suddenly round to the south, and the whole aspect of the combat was instantly changed. The flames were carried high against the walls, licking the palisades with fiery tongues, while dense clouds of smoke rolled backwards, driving the garrison from the trenches and from every station of defence.

By this marvellous reversal of fortune Te Rauparaha was not slow to profit, and no sooner had the firing of the defenders slackened than his men crept up to the walls, and, as an essential precaution, filled up the loopholes through which the Ngai-Tahu marksmen (Concluded on page 2.)



Te Rauparaha.



THE TIKI KAIAPOI.

Erected on the site of the old Kaiapohia Pa.