



Te Rauparaha by William Bambridge. Kapiti took his eye as likely headquarters for trading with the European. Print from the Alexander Turnbull Library.

Ngamotu and in 1829 by one at each of Waikato Heads and Tauranga. By 1830 there were six traders operating at Kawhia and Tapsell had opened a trading centre at Maketu. All of them were buying flax and paying in guns.

In 1823 Te Rauparaha had begun developing his trading base on Kapiti. He traded flax for guns and built up an arsenal to go raiding for greenstone in the South Island. By 1825 Ngati Toa's 340 fighting men had more guns per warrior than any tribe south of the Bay of Islands. The boom in flax trading was on. In 1830 ten traders took 102 tons of scraped flax from Kapiti — one eighth of New Zealand's supply to Sydney that year. It took some organising by Te Rauparaha and his agent to develop the trade to this extent. At first the Maori people might not have done very well out of their trading relationships, but mutual controls soon grew up, preventing exploitation of one race by the other. The Maori soon knew the types and models of guns and were examining them closely before closing a deal. Within a year or two Te Rauparaha's people were demanding both quality and quantity in all the goods for which they traded, and in return did their utmost to supply the Europeans' needs, for from them they obtained the means to fight their wars of conquest.

After 1840 when large numbers of European settlers arrived in New Zealand, the Maori began to turn his attention from purely material goods to Pakeha ways and customs. The coastal tribes took to the shipping business; in 1844 the Opotiki people owned two small vessels and the Whakatane people owned another. European methods of agriculture were adopted. Wheat and other crops were planted and the increasing cultivation demanded new implements and created new needs. In 1846 a fair acreage of wheat was grown in the Manawatu and in 1847 two flour mills were built in Taranaki and paid for in pigs. At Rangiaowhia a mill costing £200 was erected in 1847 and the money was subscribed by the local Waikato people in £1 shares.

MAORI AGRICULTURE ENCOURAGED

Governor Grey encouraged Maori agriculture by making private and public loans to buy ploughs, mills or small vessels. During his governorship Maori in many parts of the country were enthusiastically adapting their lives to the new market economy. They had extensive areas in crops, they raised livestock and even won prizes at the local A and P Shows of the time. They also amassed large sums of money. According to the manager of the Wellington bank the local Maori had £150,000 in 1842. All over the country they bought ploughs and carts and in several areas built water

mills to grind their wheat. By 1853 in the Waikato alone there were 10 mills worth £2,700 and eight more were being erected. In the 1850s Maoris owned and operated most of the coastal shipping in the North Island; by 1858 there were 53 Maori vessels of more than 14 tons registered at Auckland. They supplied the local market with most of its produce and exported considerable quantities of potatoes, wheat and other foodstuffs to Australia.

In 1857 the Bay of Plenty, Taupo and Rotorua tribes numbering about 8,000 people had about 9,000 acres in wheat, potatoes, maize and kumara. They owned nearly 1,000 horses, 200 head of cattle, 5,000 pigs, 4 water-powered mills and 96 ploughs as well as 43 coastal vessels of around 20 tons each, and more than 900 canoes. In 1857 European traders on the East Coast paid the Ngati Porou 13,000 for 46,000 bushels of wheat. Auckland Maori supplied large quantities of fruit, pumpkins, maize, potatoes, kumara, pigs and most of the fish for the town. In a single year 1,792 canoes entered Auckland harbour loaded with produce, firewood and kauri gum.

This first period of prosperity for the new nation was followed only too soon by depression. As the gold boom petered out in Australia and their agricultural industry expanded there was a rapid fall in agricultural prices in both Australia and New Zealand. Auckland and Taranaki, two heavily populated Maori areas, were hard hit for the Maori people were the biggest producers of food in the North Island.



Hongi Hika — "the greatest entrepreneur of his time" — painted by Horatio Gordon Robley. Print from the Alexander Turnbull Library.

The prosperity of the colony had attracted increasing numbers of Europeans and at the height of the boom pressure on Maori to sell their land had intensified. This, and disillusionment at the slump, led to an immediate Maori reaction in the form of the King Movement. The Waikato and Taranaki Maori were some of the hardest working and most successful farmers and exporters. But in the late 1850s farms and mills lay idle as the Maori met in great runangas to discuss the setting up of a King. Disillusionment led ultimately to war. The entrepreneurial spark was dampened for many years but never extinguished.

Today graduates from the Tu Tangata Business Wananga number nearly 60 and are the nucleus of a whanau scattered all over the country from north of Kaitiā to Invercargill. They carry the flame which flickered back into life in the 20th century and which today burns more brightly than ever.