

## TO-DAY'S PROCEEDINGS.

## THE PRESENTING OF FOOD.

A large party of Natives to-day presented food. They marched to the tents in procession, and made the ground shake with dancing. They presented old Maori foods—Pohui, seed of convolvulus; mamaku, heart of fern-tree (*Cyathea medullaris*); para, from the root of a bush growing six feet high (*Marattia fraxilla*); roi, old Maori fern, got in places where fern has not been burnt off (*Pteris aquilina esculenta*); tawa berries (*Nesodaphne tawa*); this is to make soup. The chief, in presenting, said, "This is food which the Maoris formerly got from the mountains." An old song was sung with each present.

[From the Auckland *Evening Star*, 9th May.]

## THE GREAT NATIVE MEETING AT HIKURANGI.

(By Telegraph from our Special Reporter. By special Carrier.)

## TAWHIAO'S EXPECTATIONS.—THE BUSINESS.

THE leading chiefs say everything is in Tawhiao's hands. If he comes to an understanding with Sir George Grey, they will conform. They pay the utmost respect to the King. The expectation appears to be that Sir George Grey will make the first proposals. It is understood that Tawhiao is favourable to the formation of a separate Native district, the Government to recognize his authority over his own people. Another condition would probably be the condonation of all murders. The restoration of Waikato is not likely to be demanded.

Te Ngakan and Te Tuhi will be the principal speakers on the Maori side to-day. The discussion is expected to be short, the main points for discussion being already settled.

## THE RETURN.

Horses are to be ready for return to-day, but the party will probably return to Alexandra early to-morrow.

## THE JOURNEY TO ALEXANDRA.

## ON THE FRONTIER.

Alexandra, 5th May.

I am again on the confines of civilization—"the ragged and frayed-out edges of barbarism," as a Yankee editor once termed the Indian frontier; and I am beginning this my first budget at 11.30 o'clock at night in the billiard-room of Alexandra Hotel, which host Finch has kindly allowed me to monopolize. Everybody is a monopolist of some sort up here. Some monopolize land, some the bar and passage leading to it, and others have monopolized all the sitting and bed-rooms. The very Maori *rangatiras* have turned monopolists of this type; and your representative, imitating the general example, has become the biggest monopolist of all, for I have this great billiard-room all to myself. There is a holy Sabbath calm around me. The week-day rattle and bustle are hushed. The jingle of glasses, the tramp of many feet in the bare passages, and the loud voices of the "noblest savages in the world" are silent. I can hear the regular ticking of the clock in this big, gloomy room, lighted by a single kerosene lamp. The Alcock's table gleams white and ghostly, with its great calico cover; and the cues and billiard balls lie idle, enjoying, with animated creation, the rest of the Sabbath. The only drawback is the skip of an occasional "lively flea" (fleas are not Sabbatarians), which appears to prefer the leg of my trousers to the matting.

But enough of this. Do not let the reader be apprehensive lest I should inflict upon him some long reference to Gœthe, or inappropriate quotation from Milton about "melting downs," and so forth, for I am not in the melting mood—in fact, it's rather cold.

## OUR REPORTER "STRIKES ILE."

To begin then: The Ministerial party, consisting of the Hon. Sir George Grey, K.C.B., Premier; W. Mitchell, Esq., Private Secretary; the Hon. J. Sheehan, Native Minister; Mr. Grace, his Private Secretary; Hon. Hoani Nahe, Maori member of the Cabinet; —. Potts, Esq., a Canterbury settler, and an ex-M.H.R., who has come up to see what Maoris really are like in their wild state; Henae Kaihau and Hori Tauroa, Waiuku chiefs; our old friend Paul, of Orakei; Hemi Te Ao, a chief of Ngatiraukawa and a near relative of Tawhiao; Mrs. Prior, *née* Timata, also a near relative of the Maori King; Mr. G. Brown, Native Interpreter; the Misses Terawiti, daughters of the Rev. Heta Terawiti; and some other persons of more or less distinction (not forgetting your special), left the railway-station at Auckland shortly after half-past 11 o'clock this morning in a special train for Waikato. By the same train there also travelled a number of Natives, who are going up to Cambridge to attend the Native Lands Court there. Mr. Macdonald, the courteous and energetic manager of Auckland railways, was in attendance, and had made able dispositions to convey the party to their destination with despatch and comfort. How well he accomplished his task may be understood when I say that the run to Mercer, including a stoppage at the Penrose Junction, and a short stay at Drury, a distance of 43 miles, was accomplished in two hours, the train travelling at the rate of 25 miles an hour through the swamps beyond that point, where the curves and gradients are slight. A short stay was made at Mercer for breakfast, and I think the lessee of the luncheon-room deserves great credit for the manner in which an excellent spread was laid out. If Brother Fox were to travel here, with an appetite sharpened by an early morning journey, I think he would scarcely again inveigh in the Assembly against railway refreshment-rooms.

## LYING NEWSPAPERS.

The train made another short stay at Huntley, to water. I took advantage of the interval to make a note or two. There were several chiefs of rank, I will not say smell, in the same carriage, and my hieroglyphics appeared rather to tickle their fancy. Taking me for a rather played-out Caucasian, they commenced to analyze my general get-up in their own lingo, with some speculations as to my