

A MAORI HIGH PRIEST.

One of the most prominent chiefs at the reception of Sir George Grey, yesterday, was the high priest of the Torea at Sir Donald McLean's last meeting. He appeared in a Maori mat, holding a *taiaha*. When, previous to Sir George Grey's arrival he was pressed to clothe himself decently he replied, "I am a Maori. Receive our friend Grey as a Maori." After the reception he dressed himself a perfect swell.

A deputation from the Te Awamutu Board, consisting of Mr. W. Sloane, Chairman of the Board, Mr. Roche, and Mr. Henderson, one of the oldest settlers, and a pioneer who lived beyond the confiscated boundary, through all the panics, rode many miles and presented an address to Sir George Grey last evening. They were very courteously received.

The Maoris are to be employed making a road to Puniu. Mr. Sheehan promised to reply officially regarding other district wants. The reception proceedings were most creditable to Alexandra.

THE RECEPTION AT HAMILTON.

Sir George and suite received an enthusiastic reception yesterday. The Chairmen of the Highway Boards and others met them at the station and drove them to the Hamilton Hotel, where hundreds of settlers and townspeople and numbers of Maoris were waiting to receive them. Two deputations, *re* the bridge and reserves for the borough, waited on Sir George, and were courteously received. The party went on to Alexandra about 4 o'clock.

Fifty pounds were granted to the Te Awamutu Highway Board for a road to Puniu, Native labour to be employed. Sir George Grey is visiting old residents this morning.

DEPUTATIONS.

A deputation from the Alexandra Highway Board waited on the Premier. It was introduced by Major T. C. Tisdall, and consisted of Messrs. Aubin, Lacon, Secombe, McNinn, Edgcumbe, and Tisdall, and asked the Government to assist in the construction of the main road direct from Ngauawahia to Alexandra, avoiding the detour *via* Hamilton. They said the small settlers were neglected by the late Government. The roads were made in the interest of the large landowners. They requested that the Constabulary be employed. The Premier said Alexandra was certainly left in an isolated position, and recommended the Chairman to forward a letter to the Minister for Public Works. Major Tisdall also brought under the notice of the Premier the deviation of the railway extension *via* Te Awamutu, instead of to Alexandra, as originally designed. Such changes were made from political motives.

The Premier replied that he would have to visit other places before leaving Waikato, and could not carry these things in mind. They had better write officially.

Major Tisdall also asked permission for the removal of hundreds of tons of shingles and firewood in Mangapuri bush, now rotting consequent on the Government having forbidden their removal.

The Premier recommended the growth and spread of acacia for firewood, and recommended the Chairman to communicate with the Waste Lands Board to see whether there were just grounds of complaint.

Major Tisdall asked a contribution for the erection of a new Courthouse, pointing out that Alexandra was central for Court business for Harapipi, Rangiaohi, Ngahinepouri, Kihikihi, and Paterangi. The Premier recommended official communication.

Mr. McNinn referred to the injustice of the valuation clause of the Rating Act with respect to unimproved property.

Mr. Sheehan replied that no doubt the Act was passed in the interest of large landowners. The only possible remedy was dissolution. Not a third of the present Lower House would vote for an alteration in the valuation clause.

The Premier said the matter was really in their own hands. Every member of the present Government in the Lower House was in favour of the small settler.

Mr. Sheehan: Next session we shall have made many material amendments in the Counties and Rating Acts. Large landowners now control the district by plurality of votes.

Mr. A. S. Sherret, member of the Raglan County Council, introduced by Mr. McMann, asked whether the Government had taken steps towards meeting the views of the Council regarding the Raglan-Waikato Road. The Premier said perhaps it would be better for the Government to carry out the road without necessitating the Raglan Council to bring the Act into operation. He would be glad to see this road made also to Kawhia. He requested Mr. Sheehan to communicate with the Chairman of the Raglan Council.

A meeting will be held at Whakairoiro on this side of Kopua. Te Wheoro is coming up with a hundred men in war canoes. The Natives are preparing food for the meeting. Probably there will be no move from here to-day.

Should Rewi express a desire to see Sir George Grey privately at his settlement, Sir George will probably visit Te Awamutu and Kihikihi.

The British ensign, over the door of Finches' Alexandra Hotel, was lent by Major Mair, and was riddled with bullet holes in the operation on the East Coast. Te Wheoro has arrived.

Tawhire, the brother-in-law of Tawhiao, has just arrived from Kopua, and waited on the Premier and Mr. Sheehan. Tawhire welcomed them to Waikato. The Ministerial party will proceed upwards at 8 o'clock to-morrow morning.

[From the *Auckland Evening Star*, February 1.]

Alexandra, Thursday, 3.5 p.m.

Two canoes in full feather have just arrived from Point Russell. The larger one is paddled by thirty Natives, and named "Teatairehia." It received an ovation from the Maoris and Europeans, numbering 100, on the bank of the river. The canoes go on to the junction of the Waipa and Puniu, McLean's starting point by water at the meeting of 1876.