

in proceeding with the business of the meeting. Rewi has again intimated his anxiety to have an interview separately with Sir George Grey, notwithstanding the unceasing attempts made by well-known persons who are adverse to the present Government to induce Rewi and the Ngatimaniapotos to stand aloof.

[From the *New Zealander*, 8th May.]

Alexandra, 7th May.

SIR GEORGE GREY, the Hon. Mr. Sheehan, and the Hon. Hoani Nape left here early this morning on horseback for Hikurangi. They were accompanied by several Europeans and a number of Native chiefs. There is a favourable change in the weather, and everything looks promising. The speech-making will not begin till to-morrow.

Sir George Grey and the Native Minister arrived at Hikurangi shortly before 2 o'clock, and the reception accorded them was pronounced to be the finest ever witnessed in New Zealand. Over 5,000 Natives were assembled, and the Ministerial party were escorted by a large body of Natives. When the cavalcade came within view, the Natives, who occupied the brow of the hill, shouted their welcome, and went through a customary ceremony observed on great occasions when receiving illustrious visitors. The sight was simply grand and imposing; no pen or pencil could depict it. When Sir George Grey and the Hon. Mr. Sheehan approached the settlement, they were received by King Tawhiao, who seemed greatly pleased to see them. He cordially bade them welcome on behalf of his people. He and the Ministers spent some time in conversation. All is now excitement and bustle. The Natives are pitching tents for the accommodation of visitors. A finer spot for a meeting could not have been selected. It overlooks the country round, and commands a splendid and extended view. The meeting will commence to-morrow. I shall forward you particulars in my next despatch. This message will be conveyed to Alexandra by a Native. The distance is over eighteen miles.

[From the *New Zealander*, 9th May.]

Alexandra, 8th May.

HIKURANGI, Tuesday.—I forwarded you a brief telegram intimating our arrival at the scene of the approaching meeting. I now send you a few particulars, hurriedly gleaned, as to the reception which Sir George Grey and the Hon. Mr. Sheehan received. Sir George Grey, being rather unwell to undertake the whole journey on horseback, left Alexandra, accompanied by Mr. Potts and Mr. Mitchell (Private Secretary), shortly after 9 o'clock, in a *Wakatana*, or war canoe, called Te Atairehia, the second largest of the seven canoes; it was elaborately decorated, and fully manned, the prow or *kou* was richly carved, and below the usual grotesque figure-head there was also some fine carved work called a *tiki*. Branching out obliquely from the prow were two wooden rods about 8 feet in length, covered with feathers of various kinds, arranged so as to form the segment of a circle, and at the points were two circles. This ornamental adornment is meant by the Natives to represent the rays of the sun. The stern decorations consisted of a long carving surmounted by a poll of considerable length, called a *taurapa*, covered with feathers of various kinds. The scenery on both sides of the winding river was beautiful and varied. The admirers of New Zealand ferns would have been greatly pleased at the fine specimens to be seen on the margin of the river, as we glided smoothly along. Many choice varieties were clustered together, and the foliage seemed as if designedly placed by some skilful hand, so beautifully were the colours blended. The canoe proceeded as far as Whakairoiro, the junction of the rivers Waipa, Mangakurua, and Ngakowhi. The Hon. Mr. Sheehan and the visitors proceeded thence on horseback, where they were joined by Sir George Grey, and they travelled together the remainder of the journey, a distance of over twelve miles. The country traversed presented scenery of the most lovely and romantic description. The soil is loamy and very rich. When the party arrived within a mile of Hikurangi, headed by the Premier and Native Minister, they were requested to form themselves into a procession of two deep. This being done, the cavalcade extended for a considerable distance, owing to a large number of Native chiefs who, by previous arrangement, were told off to accompany the Ministerial party. This track was but recently formed. On ascending a hill near the settlement, we caught the first glimpse of the assembled Natives, who occupied the brow of the hill close to the settlement, and stood out in bold relief against the horizon. They were ranged several rows deep, and extended a distance of about 500 yards. It was a magnificent sight—one such as has never been witnessed by any Minister of the Crown or Governor of the colony except the present Premier. Over 5,000 Natives were present, including the chiefs of the tribes inhabiting the country from the mouth of the Waikato River to Maungatautari, and thence to Kawhia. There were also about 200 of the Ngatimaniapoto present. The scene will not soon be forgotten by those who were fortunate enough to witness it. The Natives were dressed in true Maori fashion, and they wore a profusion of various feathers and other articles of personal adornment. The women were attired in varied coloured dresses, bright red being the predominating colour. Intermingled as they were with the men, they imparted a picturesqueness to the tableau, and rendered the *tout ensemble* more brilliant and attractive. Upon Sir George Grey and visitors approaching a little closer, the cries of welcome were commenced by the Natives. They began at the end nearest the approaching visitors and passed along the line to its termination, when they recommenced and were repeated several times until the party had reached within a hundred yards of the settlement. A few blank cartridges were fired off in honor of the occasion during the *ngeri powhiri*. After this the people at the settlement retired to a vacant space in front of Tawhiao's large house, a building 400 feet in length, and capable of holding some 500 persons, and which was erected in nine days, where they halted and faced the Premier and his party, who by this time had dismounted, in accordance with a message received from Tawhiao, who then advanced at the head of a small party, accompanied by his Secretary, Te Ngakau, to meet Sir George Grey and the Native Minister. When within a few paces, Tawhiao hastened his steps, and eagerly and warmly shook hands with the Premier, Native Minister, and other visitors. The greeting was of a most cordial and friendly character. There was nothing formal about it; on the contrary, it resembled the meeting of two old friends who had been unavoidably separated from each other for a long period of time. It was pleasing to hear those persons who