

advanced to our trap and asked if she had the honour of addressing the Premier. Receiving an affirmative answer she wished to know if it were true that the first woman to settle upon any block received a bonus of seven acres of land, as she was the pioneer woman upon this block—the Waimarino. Mr Seddon replied that there was no such regulation.

*“ Raetihi.*

“ We were now in the midst of a splendid forest of mixed bush, about the best of the kind, we are told, that one can find in the North Island. Three miles further on, or fifteen miles from Karioi, we reach the site of the township of Raetihi, of which a good deal is likely to be heard in the future. It lies in the heart of the bush, in the centre of a fine level block of Crown land, 100,000 acres in area, and at the proposed junction of the Wanganui Road with the road to Auckland *via* Okura. Of the 100,000 acres, 70,000 have already been taken up in small-farm sections.

“ Four miles beyond Raetihi we arrive at Mangaetoroa, a Government school reserve, and notable for being the first clearing made in this part of the country. The land, which has been cleared, is down in grass, and men are at work constructing a tunnel to carry off the waters of the Mangaetoroa. For loveliness of forest scenery and varied and picturesque beauty it would be difficult to match the last fourteen miles of the road towards Pipiriki. At no distant date this is bound to be a favourite route of travel for tourists, the wonder is more has not been heard of it before this. At the summit of the Waipuna Hill one instinctively reins in his steed to feast the eyes upon the charming panorama that here unfolds itself, one of its leading features being the distinct though distant outlines of Ruapehu, Ngauruhoe, and Tongariro, which close in the south-eastern side of the horizon.

“ Nine miles from Pipiriki we pass over the newly-completed Mangoihe Bridge, which has a span of 80ft. over a deep gorge. Late in the afternoon from the crest of a hill we come in sight of the Wanganui River, and down the pretty rapid descent of road we canter into Pipiriki amidst the welcomes of the Natives.

*“ Up the Wanganui River*

“ The Premier consented to the request of Topia to visit on Sunday the Native settlement of Tieke, thirteen miles up the river. The compact was made, and at 9 a.m. on Sunday we were all aboard a big canoe, 78ft. long, and pushing out into the stream. There were twenty-eight of us, ten Europeans and the rest Maoris. Under the stimulus of the steady beat of sixteen paddles the canoe swept rapidly up the stream. A foglemah in the bow encouraged the paddlers to their best exertions by stirring cries delivered in a sonorous voice, to which responses were made from time to time with a fierce and startling suddenness. Very soon we encountered the rapids, and we had reason to admire the dexterity with which our crew handled their iron-tipped manuka poles. With rhythmic regularity they lifted the poles, and with simultaneous movement they plunged them into the water, where they grated harshly upon the stony bottom of the river, while the canoe shot forward through the water that leaped, boiled, and surged on either side. The Europeans twice disembarked while the canoe with great skill was propelled through the madly-leaping waves, but all the other rapids were passed without stoppage or difficulty.

“ Entrancing was the kaleidoscopic picture that unfolded itself under our eyes at every turn in the serpentine course of the river. On either side rose a lofty and perpendicular bank of rock, clad from foot to summit with dense foliage resplendent with tree-ferns and other graceful specimens of native shrubbery. Sometimes a rocky grotto or cave arrested our gaze, sometimes a deep cleft or chasm streaked by a narrow ribbon of foaming water, anon a small creek, itself a dream of ideal virgin beauty, and occasionally a Native whare, to which our attention was attracted by the chant of welcome delivered in shrill and long-sustained notes by some Native woman. The fogleman was relieved from time to time, Topia himself taking a turn at the vocal exercise, and also bearing a hand at intervals with the paddles. About noon one of the manuka poles was raised aloft in the prow, with two handkerchiefs fluttering from it, one of crimson and the other of orange. A little further on we caught sight of a light canoe, which was shooting along far ahead to apprise the villagers of our approach. With shouts of joy our paddlers bent all their energies to the task of overtaking the smaller craft, but after a spurt of a quarter of an hour, during which the smaller canoe more than held its own, our men recognised that the struggle was hopeless, and therefore slackened their stroke.

“ A few minutes before 1 o'clock a turn of the river brought Tieke into view, perched upon a small grassy promontory. The Natives there had caught sight of us as soon as, if not sooner than, we perceived the settlement, for repeated discharges of firearms warned us that they were assembled, and had already begun to announce the welcome that awaited us. As we drew nearer we saw them rushing down helter-skelter—men, women, and children—to the waterside, where they began their song and dance of welcome, accompanied by much gesticulation, the women especially commanding notice by reason of their demonstrativeness and the garlands of willow which they had entwined in their hair or waved in their hands.

*“ A Native Meeting.*

“ The party having landed, Topia led the Premier and his party to the handsome *whare puni*, where, in accordance with formal Maori usage, the visitors were to await the ceremonious welcome that is given on all such occasions. The women were busy with the scraping of potatoes, the preparation of pork, and the copper Maoris in readiness for the midday meal. Gradually the people sat down in groups in front of their whares, and eventually an aged chief, bearing a manuka pole in his hand, advanced to the centre of the *marae*, and, facing the *whare puni*, delivered in a clearly-pitched voice his speech of welcome. It abounded in *‘Haere mais*, and was after the usual Maori style of flowery oratory, with abundant repetition of phrase.