

1922.
NEW ZEALAND.

NATIVE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE ROOM.

REPORT OF PROCEEDING AT THE OPENING CEREMONY.

Laid on the Table of the House of Representatives by Leave.

WEDNESDAY, 23RD OCTOBER, 1922.

A MOST interesting Maori ceremony was held at the formal opening of the Native Affairs Committee room in the new Parliament Building. The committee-room, which faces on Museum Street, is large and finely proportioned, and its walls are tastefully decorated with Maori carvings, the wall behind the chair occupied by the Chairman (Mr. J. A. Young, M.P. for Waikato) being adorned with especially fine carvings, representing the entrance to a *whare runanga*, or Maori meeting-house. The committee-room has a door at either end, the architraves of which are also adorned with fine Native carvings. The carving was all carried out by Te Kiwi Amohau, of Rotorua, one of the paramount chiefs of the Arawa Tribe, assisted by Te Ngaru Ranapia of the same tribe.

The ceremony, which took place in the corridor outside the committee-room, was conducted by Mita Taupopoki, of the Tuhourangi Tribe, Whakarewarewa, assisted by Te Naera Houkotuku, of Rotorua, and other chiefs, consisting of various chants or incantations, accompanied by the appropriate Native posturings and dances. First came an incantation to free the building from all evil influences; then a chant to clear the meeting-house of the *tapu*, so as to enable ladies to enter it; every Maori meeting-house being to them a holy house and barred to the entrance of women. The next chant was connected with all implements that were used in hewing the trees from which the timber was obtained for the building; and the final chant related to the laying-down of the mats for the building by the womenfolk.

The Prime Minister (the Right Hon. W. F. Massey) and his colleagues in the Ministry, together with a large number of members of both Houses of Parliament, their wives, and others, had gathered to witness the ceremony, which was followed with the keenest interest.

THE "KAWANGA" CEREMONY.

As a newly carved house the Native Affairs Committee room was by the Maoris considered *tapu*. The *tapu* must be disposed of, or its dangerous powers averted, before the chamber could be safely occupied. And so it was arranged that the elders of Te Arawa Tribe, whose expert carvers, Te Kiwi Amohau, of Ohinemutu, and Te Ngaru Ranapia, of Mourea, Rotoiti, had executed the fine carvings and the reed panel-work of the room, should have the honour of performing the ceremony. The actual ceremony was performed by Mita Taupopoki, of Whakarewarewa, and Te Naera Houkotuku, of Ohinemutu; the old chief Te Kiwi Amohau, though present, was indisposed. They were assisted by W. K. Wi Hapi, of Te Puke, and Timi Maaka, of Matata.

The following are the incantations used in the ceremony:—

1. KARAKIA WAERE (addressed to the building as a whole, and to lift the *tapu* off the same):—

Waerea i runga, waerea i raro,
Waerea i a Rangi, waerea i a Papa e tu:
Waerea i waenga, waerea i nga tapu,
Waerea i nga mana, waerea i nga wehi,
Waerea i nga makutu.
Tukua atu tama kia puta i waho
Ki te tawhangawhanga:
He putanga ariki no Rongo ki te ata taura,
Ea mai te tipua!
Mai ea mai te tawhito, ko Tuwhakabeke-nuku,
Ko Tuwhakabeke-rangi to manawa
Ko tahu manawa ka irihia
Whano, whano, haramai te toki!
Haumi e . . . Hui e . . . Taiki e . . .