

## SPEECH BY THE NATIVE MINISTER.

After the chants were finished, the Native Minister (the Hon. J. G. Coates), addressing the Maori chiefs and ladies and gentlemen present, said that it gave him great pleasure to be there for that important occasion. He thought that all parliamentarians who had studied Maori history and the history of New Zealand would recognize the significance and importance of the ceremony opening the meeting-house of the Native Affairs Committee. Prior to 1867 there was a Native Affairs Committee composed entirely of pakehas, but since 1867 the Maoris had had the right of representation in Parliament, and had elected four members to each Parliament. One could readily understand the wealth of history and tradition that had been built up and that surrounded the doings of the Native Affairs Committee, in view of the amount of work its members had to do, and the knowledge they must have of Native Affairs. The Committee was governed by the highest traditions of justice and fair play to both races in the administration of its affairs. Great importance attached to Maori affairs in Parliament, and to the Native Affairs Committee, which was the final court of appeal in regard to matters affecting the Maoris. Every Maori had the entrance to the room to have his difficulties and his grievances inquired into, and to endeavour to get justice and right and fair play there. With that, of course, went Maori sentiment and atmosphere; and he thought that he voiced the feelings of all present when he expressed the hope that the Native Affairs Committee would always keep that atmosphere and sentiment, and hold to the law that the Maori, too, had got rights — that he had the right to walk on the same track and at the same pace as the pakeha.

He was very glad the Maori chiefs had removed all evil spells from their meeting-house. He was also glad that Mrs. Coates had not got to climb the ridge-pole, cut a hole through the roof, and enter the meeting-house that way. He did not know that she would feel quite up to it. He hoped that the race that owned the country previously, the race that we were proud of as fellow-citizens and as brothers, would long continue to flourish, and that the two races, Maori and pakeha, would always live together in unity. When they entered the room as members of Parliament they entered it as equals, and as men who had to deal with matters that were very difficult; and it was part of our history and well established that the Maori had fair play and justice. He hoped that the high traditions of the past would always remain with the room they were about to enter, and that they would always retain the history he had referred to as part of our social atmosphere here in New Zealand.

At this stage Te Kiwi Amohau handed the key of the committee-room to Mrs. Coates, who then entered, after which a further incantation took place, and the other ladies present entered the room followed by the Prime Minister. As Mr. Massey passed in a spirited *haka* was danced, and the others present were afterwards admitted.

## THE CHAIRMAN'S SPEECH.

On behalf of the Native Affairs Committee, Mr. YOUNG extended a hearty welcome to the Prime Minister, the Maori chiefs, and other visitors. The opening of the meeting-house of the Committee, called the *Whare Runanga*, was an event unique in the history of our Parliament; and he thought it only fitting that the Government had provided a room for the Native Affairs Committee so much in accordance with Native ideas and traditions. He had learnt to the best of his ability during the past eleven years that he had been connected with it the great traditions of the Committee and how to uphold them, and so far as they could they were carrying them out to-day. He expressed the appreciation and thanks of the Committee to the Maori chiefs who had come there to lift the *tapu* and remove all evil influences, if any, from their meeting-house, so that they could feel that Divine Providence would guide them in their deliberations for the good of the Maori people and of the Dominion as a whole.

## EX NATIVE MINISTERS.

The Hon. Sir JAMES CARROLL, K.C.M.G., M.L.C., who was called upon by the Chairman, referred to the harmony that had always characterized the relations between the two races since the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840. The true import of that treaty, he said, might not be known to all. According to international law, a treaty could only be made between two sovereign races; so the kindly feeling of the British mind led them to raise the Maori race to an equality in order to arrive at that treaty. The Native Affairs Committee had always been marked in the selection of it by Parliament by the appointment of men adaptable to and fitted for the consideration of matters which were inseparable from the conduct of the two races in their dealings with land and other property. Both pakeha and Maori had often had to appeal to the Committee in regard to their grievances, and in all his experience the Committee had set itself to weigh with an even hand the question of right and wrong between the two races without any friction whatever. That had been the case right down from the first, and might it always continue. Might they never forget the high traditions of the past.

A *haka*, spiritedly performed by Sir James Carroll, the Hon. A. T. Ngata, and Mr. Tau Henare, M.P., rounded off the speech.

The Hon. Sir W. H. HERRIES, K.C.M.G., M.P., followed, and said that as one who had been nine years Native Minister and twenty years a member of the Committee, he was extremely pleased to be present at the ceremony. He was especially pleased to see the Hon. Sir James Carroll present, who had had a much longer term than himself both as Native Minister and member of the Committee. He was very pleased that the Committee had at last got into a permanent home, and one in keeping with the traditions of the Maori people. When he first entered Parliament the Committee met in a room in the old wooden building where the present Library stood, and when the Library building was erected in 1898 it sat in the Sociology-room, while the Mines Committee sat in the present Newspaper-room. Then the Committee migrated to the room in the old wooden wing that had formerly been the