

Mr. Hill stated that he was well acquainted with the locality under discussion. He frequently angled for trout in the stream that ran at the foot of the old pa. It was a secluded spot, with a pretty piece of bush that was much appreciated by the tired angler for the midday halt. Native birds were to be heard and seen in this sanctuary, including tuis, fantails, bell-birds, pigeons, and, occasionally, a kaka. The old fortification would, he was certain, be greatly appreciated by future generations. Addressing the old rangitira Inia, the speaker concluded his remarks by stating: "Taranaki (Mount Egmont) has always been with us, and will endure for all time. Let the Natives and pakehas now decide that Tapuinikau also be saved and so endure." In the generations to follow the pa would serve as a fine example of the work of the ancient Maoris in providing sanctuary for themselves in the days long gone by.

Mr. Armit explained to the Natives that if the tribe desired to cede the pa to the Crown the Government would make a Proclamation embodying their wishes. A special Board consisting of three Natives and three pakehas would, he thought, be in the best interests of all.

Inia te Ngongohau thanked the speakers for their interesting remarks. He was anxious to have his people's old fighting-pa preserved for ever. He willingly gave his consent to hand over his trusteeship. He was getting old, and the responsibilities could be handled better by younger men. He wanted both races represented on the proposed Board. His day was done and his sun was setting. It was good to know the pakeha did not covet the pa, but wished to help the Natives have it set aside for ever. The speaker then, in a dramatic voice, stated: "I will soon be departing to the realms of my forefathers. I hereby give up my trusteeship and my authority."

The Commissioner called for three nominations of the Native people as representatives of the Board, and the following were selected: Rangi Tekiri (Fred Inia), Tiriti Wharepouri, and Kupe Whiti Hoki. At a later date Messrs. H. N. Chapman, Warea, and W. B. Smith, Newall Road, were appointed to the Board.

Tapuinikau is one of the greatest historic fighting-pas of the Taranaki Tribe. In giving particulars about it to a *News* reporter, Mr. Skinner stated that it underwent a great siege in 1818. A northern war-party comprising about two hundred warriors started from Kaipara on a raiding expedition to Taranaki, and gathered recruits as it went from Kawhia, Mohakatino, and even as far as Paritutu. Their object was to secure as booty a haul of the famous mats made by the industrious Taranaki Natives from the best-fibred flax in New Zealand. Many men from the neighbouring hapus gathered into the powerful pa to do battle with the invaders. Great preparations were made and every precaution taken in accordance with the old Maori ideas of defence; great stores of stones were gathered up into the fighting-towers and on stages erected on trees commanding the trenches and approaches to the pa. There were a great many chiefs in the pa at the time of the attack. At the first onslaught the *taua*, or war-party, was repulsed by the Taranaki people under Ruakiri. The invaders then prepared to make a regular siege of the place, with the idea of starving out the garrison, while the young men of the *taua* ranged the country in search of food and plunder. In the first assault on the pa a great many of the *taua* had fallen, notwithstanding that they possessed guns, whilst the defenders had lost only a few men, even though their only weapons of defence were Native ones. The besiegers, therefore, were thirsting for revenge. Amongst the *taua*, however, were some of the Te Atiawa chiefs, and one of these, Pahau, was desirous that the Taranaki people should be saved. For that purpose he approached the pa himself, and during negotiations with the besieged he was reminded that his grandfather had been saved alike by the Taranakis when they took the Awa-te-take Pa. The upshot of it was that Pahau conveyed this information to two other chiefs associated with him, and after consultation it was agreed to allow the besieged Taranakis to escape from the pa by night. This decision, conveyed secretly to the pa, was very welcome, for supplies in the stronghold were running short, while the *taua*, who had all the country around at their command, were determined to reduce the pa by starvation. The same night that the information was received, with secrecy and despatch the garrison passed out of their pa with the connivance of the Atiawa sentries and made good their escape to the Te Kohatu Pa on the Patua (Kaitake) Ranges. In the morning the *taua* were very surprised at seeing no smoke or hearing no voices in the pa, for the coup had been managed so well that no one but those immediately concerned knew of the arrangements made. Great wonder was expressed as to how the besieged had escaped. During the siege Tawhia, a chief in the northern contingent, was close under one of the towers of the pa, when one of the defenders cast a big stone at him, which split open his head. By careful doctoring, according to Maori ideas, he recovered, the treatment being to pour hot oil into the wound, which was then sewn up. After the escape of the garrison of Tapuinikau and the plunder of the pa the whole *taua* returned to their respective homes, taking with them numbers of slaves and other booty in the shape of mats and dried heads.

Mr. Skinner recalls the story of an unusual incident connected with the siege of the pa that illustrated the instruction in the use of firearms given to a Taranaki slave. One of the slaves was anxious to know how the musket was used. A Ngapuhi man explained the procedure, and then told the slave to look down the muzzle of the gun. The Ngapuhi pulled the trigger, and the unfortunate slave's head was shattered, much to the amusement of the surrounding crowd.

The territory round the foot of the pa, on both sides of the river, was occupied up to about twenty years ago by small families, generally old warriors, who left the more thickly populated kaingas to get away from the ever-increasing march of civilization. All their lives the old *toas*, used to the Maori way of existence, cultivated their plots of kumaras, kumi-kumi, and taro, potatoes, and corn, and collected berries in the autumn. Helped in their labours by their faithful wahines, the evening of their lives could be spent in peace and quietness near the homes of their forefathers. Then the forests were full of pigeons, kakas, tuis, wekas, and a small edible vegetarian rat, which was snared and preserved in its fat for winter use. The river alongside also provided food in the form of *tuna* (eel), while a tramp to the seashore in summer and autumn enabled the old Natives to secure a change of diet in shell fish, shark, and schnapper.