

“Te Waha o Rerekohu”

WE have received the following information from Mr. Jackson, Head Teacher of Te Araroa Maori District High School, in whose grounds the big pohutukawa of the above name, illustrated in our last issue, stands. The information was given him by Mr. W. A. Brown and Mr. E. Patae, members of the local tribal committee who in their turn received it from an old Maori gentleman named Tu Terangiwhiu Puha, who has an extensive knowledge of the local history and genealogy.

Under the Maori rule of possession, the land which a Maori wished to keep must be occupied, and custom required a Maori to keep his “fires burning” on the land.

The land on which the tree stands was given by Hati Houkamau for the building of a school, and the fact that there was no protest is proof that it had been continuously in occupation since the day of his ancestors. His ancestor was Rerekohu, a descendant of a senior line from the Paramount Chief Tu Whakairiora after whom the tribe is now called. The Ngati Manu and Ngati Harau, tribes which were “offspring” of the chief Whakairiora but not of a senior line, brought food to Rerekohu, whose house, near the pohutukawa, was called Poho Tawiriwiri, and whose store house where the food was kept was called Pataka. For that reason the pohutukawa was given the name of Te Waha o Rerekohu (the mouth of Rerekohu).

When Hati Houkamau gave the land for the school, he stipulated that Te Waha o Rerekohu, which is regarded as *tapu* owing to an incident in an inter-tribal war, be preserved. There is a school rule that pupils do not touch or climb the tree.

As genealogists hold the opinion that Rerekohu lived 450 years ago, the tree must be of considerable age. It is also of interest because of the fact that Sir Apirana Ngata was born “under” Te Waha o Rerekohu; his parents lived nearby.

The Scilly Islands Pohutukawa

ON reading the article by R. B. Godward in our last issue, Mr. William Hammond, Thornton's Bay, writes: “An early resident of Thames, Mr. J. W. Hall, chemist, was a great lover of our New Zealand flora and fauna. He had some acres of native bush to which he was constantly adding. *Podocarpus hallii* was named after him. He was keenly interested in raising the native plants from seed.

“Many years ago he told me how he had forwarded seed of the pohutukawa to General Dorrien Smith of the Scilly Islands and how years afterwards he had received word that plants grown from the seed he had forwarded were in full bloom.

“Mr. Hall said that he had also sent seed to the Riviera and other places on the Mediterranean but had not heard whether the attempt to establish the pohutukawa in that locality had been successful.”

A reference in Kirk's “The Forest Flora of New Zealand” shows that Hall probably commenced his plantation in the early 1870's. General Dorrien Smith, who was in New Zealand in 1909 and at that time probably in his 50's or 60's, would be a descendant of the Augustus Smith mentioned in Mr. Godward's article.

Another Friendly Pigeon

MR. HAMMOND also caps the “Friendly Pigeon” story in our last issue with another. “We had a very stormy and wet night, and next morning we found on the roadside a native pigeon, in an apparently dying state, wet through and unable to move. We managed to get some warm honey water down its throat, wrapped it in warm flannel, and placed it near the fire. In about 2 hours it had revived and ate some cotoneaster berries. On the following day it was quite lively and made itself at home on the back of a chair. We got more berries from the bush and its appetite seemed hard to satisfy. One morning it was perched behind me as I sat at the breakfast table. I had almost finished a cup of tea when the pigeon fluttered on to the table and sipped the remainder of the sweetened tea.

“We gave the bird full liberty outside. It rested on a post beside the lawn. It would flutter from the post on to my shoulder, then fly to the ground and sip dew from the grass then fly back to the post. It was not at all afraid of visitors, but would perch on their fingers and allow them to stroke it. It became quite fond of berries from the African box thorn. When I was confined to my bed, suffering from a cold, the pigeon walked up and down on the window sill, then flew away and we saw no more of it.”

5232 Opossums in Three Months

MR. G. G. ATKINSON, chief ranger to the Egmont Park Board, after an inspection of the opossum menace on the West Coast of the South Island reported to his Board that the southern rata in bloom would not be seen again, and that one man on the West Coast trapped 5232 opossums between January 12 and March 16 of this year, his biggest kill in one day being 235.

Sanderson Sanctuary

	£	s.	d.
Received to date	293	2	2
Mrs. F. E. H. Martin		10	0
	£293	12	2