

in the breaking-down of the Kingites' isolation. Coolness had arisen between Ngatimaniapoto, owners of the soil, and the expatriated Waikatos. The former began to fear that Waikato intended to become permanent residents and owners of their land inside the *aukati*. So Tawhiao and his Kingites migrated to Hikurangi and Te Kopua; and it was at Hikurangi, on the picturesque forest-clad shoulder of giant Pirongia, that Sir George Grey met Tawhiao in 1879.

A little later on there was a memorable meeting at Te Kopua. Afterwards the King and his adherents moved to Whati-whatihoe, just across the *aukati* river-line from the township of Alexandra. Here a large settlement was formed, and the Kingites had the advantage, always keenly appreciated by them, of closer proximity to the *pakeha* storekeepers.

In 1879 Rewi and the Kingites were agreeable to the railway running through their territory, but they still stuck to the idea of a Maori kingdom, and insisted that from the Puniu to the Whanganui River the land should be held in absolute sovereignty by the Maoris. Little by little, however, the reserve of the natives gave way. Premiers and Native Ministers and Native Agents met and conferred with the Kingite leaders time after time.

At last one day in 1881 King Tawhiao and his men laid eighty guns down at Major Mair's feet at Alexandra. The news was flashed far and wide; the Kingite resistance was over for good; Tawhiao had acknowledged the superior *mana* of the New Zealand Government. The subsequent peaceful march of the King and his six hundred armed followers through the frontier settlements; firing their guns, dancing wild war-dances, and feasting mightily; and the visit of the King to Auckland, and then to England in 1884 are matters of interesting memory.

From that time up to the present the "breaking-in" of the Rohepotae has gone on, very slowly it is true. The Main Trunk Railway led the way. The iron road now

penetrates some fifty miles through the heart of the Rohepotae, and on its course have sprung up the *pakeha* villages of Otorohanga and Te Kuiti, and the busy, if ephemeral, townships of Poru-o-Tarao, Maramataha and Kawakawa, at the head of the railway works on the Main Trunk.

An important event in the modern history of the Rohepotae was the memorable Native Land Court, held at Otorohanga in the winter of 1886, by Major W. G. Mair. The extent of land, comprising the heart of the Rohepotae, dealt with by the Court totalled the enormous area of 1,636,000 acres, the largest and most important block ever brought before the Court in New Zealand. The enquiry into the titles of the land lasted three months, and the Rohepotae was parcelled out amongst four thousand persons of the Ngatimaniapoto, Ngatiraukawa, Ngatihikairo, Ngatitwharetoa and other tribes. The area under investigation went right down to the headwaters of the Whanganui River. Another important judgment was that given by Major Gudgeon in 1892 at Kihikihi, in the Wharepuhunga block of 133,720 acres, at the back of Kihikihi, in which about a thousand native owners were interested.

A conspicuous figure at these Land Court sittings was the celebrated chief Wahanui, a giant among men. Wahanui was a remarkably big man, in a nation of big men. He stood over six feet in height, and in his prime weighed twenty-four stone. His legs especially were of enormous size. Wahanui often had great difficulty when "shopping" at the Kihikihi and Alexandra stores in getting shirts and trousers big enough to envelop his frame; but at home in his *kainqa* he discarded the uncomfortable trousers of the *pakeha*, and appeared in a blanket or a sheet. In the last few years of his life, however, the famous chief's great form was much attenuated through illness. Wahanui came of the blue blood of Ngatimaniapoto, and for many years after the war he was a leading light in the Kingite councils. Reihana, as he was then known, took part in the fighting in the war time.