

Te Mana o Riria

The following article comes from a book soon to be published which is a biography of a famous Maori M.P., Wi Pere (1837-1915). It was written by Joe Tekani Pere and is entitled *Te Mana o Riria*.

Born in Turanga-nui-a-Kiwa ("The place where 'Kiwa' the Captain of the Takitimu canoe stood.") now called Gisborne, on March 7th, 1837. Wiremu (Wi) Pere was one of Poverty Bay's illustrious sons.

Wi Pere himself, became an outstanding figure amongst the Poverty Bay and East Coast Maoris. He gained a wide knowledge of Maori traditions and customs, and proved an able spokesman in proceedings before the Native Land Court, was an outstanding orator in the use of the Maori language within the House of Representatives. His interpreter had the task of translating into English what had been narrated by Wi Pere:

"I think the House will agree with me that we have listened to the most delicious speech we have heard so far this session, both for its candour and eloquence."

"I am impressed with the outspoken utterances of the Honourable Member and the ring of earnestness in his eulogy on the Government Policy...."

(J.M. Taylor, Christchurch City, 1898.

Public Works Estimate)

Wi Pere served for some years in both branches of the Legislature,



(The influence of Riria)