

Puke Aniki files.

THE TARANAKI HERALD, WEDNESDAY, MAY 31, 1876.

PLANTING THE FIRST TREE IN THE RECREATION GROUNDS.

A VERY interesting ceremony was gone through on Monday last, namely, the planting of the first tree in the Recreation Grounds. It has been known for some time past that the gentlemen who were appointed as trustees for the grounds had been busily engaged in having portions of it levelled and paths made. They have now commenced planting it with trees, which in a few years will make the place very ornamental, and at the same time afford shelter from the sun's rays to those who visit the grounds. Monday was one of the most beautiful days we have had this season, and shortly after two o'clock a large number of persons had congregated on a hill just facing the entrance, in readiness to see the ceremony of planting the first tree gone through.

His Honor the Superintendent with Miss Carrington and Miss Jessie Carrington were early on the grounds with a number of friends. The Members of the Recreation Board—Mr. T. King, (chairman), Mr. R. J. Collins, (hon. secretary), and Messrs. T. Colson, H. Ford, J. T. Davis, J. Gilmour, and R. C. Hughes—were also present, and in various ways engaged in arranging preliminaries.

The Band (under the leadership of Mr. W. R. Townsend) was there and played several of their popular pieces. At about half-past two, everything being arranged,

Mr. T. KING (Chairman of the Recreation Grounds Board), addressing his Honor the Superintendent, said it was now upwards of thirty-sixty years since he (Mr. Carrington), as representative of the New Zealand Company, surveyed and laid out the Town of New Plymouth; and his Honor would no doubt remember that he then set apart land that surrounded the town as broad belts and also made large reserves for recreation purposes. Some time afterwards Governor Fitzroy came down here and disposed of those lands, and took from them their recreation grounds. Many years had elapsed since then, but lately it has been through his Honor's means that some amends had been made, and they had had restored to them a portion of that which had been taken away, by setting apart the land for the recreation grounds. "Such" being the case the trustees considered that it was but fitting that his Honor should be present, and take part on the occasion of the planting of the first tree in the grounds.

His Honor F. A. CARRINGTON said, as Mr. T. King had stated, he had surveyed the town and, when doing so, had set apart land for a wide belt round it. He had, also, laid out a spot for Victoria Park and another for a Botanical Gardens; besides reserves for other purposes. Then difficulties of a native character arose, which debarred the Company from acquiring the land, and the belt round the town was taken from them by the act of Governor Fitzroy to compensate settlers who had been turned off other land; and, inasmuch as this was the case, he had carefully considered the matter, and thought it only due to the Corporation that some restitution should be made for what had been taken away. He was shortly going to the Assembly, and he would make it his special duty to see that land was awarded them; and if there was no land in the town then he would try to get other lands somewhere else in lieu thereof, as an endowment for such lands as the town had been unfairly deprived of. It was a just claim, and he believed it would be heeded. At all events, he would try what he could do. He thought they could make a very pretty place there, and which, he had no doubt, would be visited by a great many, and who would have an opportunity of spending a very pleasant day in walking through the grounds.

His Honor, accompanied by his eldest daughter, were then taken to the spot prepared for the planting of the first tree, which was a British Oak. Here Mr. J. T. Davis presented Miss Carrington with a neatly polished little spade, on one side of the handle of which was the following inscription:—"To plant the first tree in the Recreation Ground, New Plymouth, May 29, 1876." On the other side, was "Presented to Miss Carrington." A large hole had been dug and the tree placed in it, which was held by Mr. T. Colson, whilst Miss Carrington very gracefully lifted some of the earth with the spade and threw it over the roots. Mr. T. Colson then took her to the north side of the mound, where a Puriri, as representing New Zealand, was planted in the same manner. The same ceremony was gone through on the west side, where a Norfolk Island Pine, representing the South Pacific Islands, and on the south side a Pinus Insignis, representing America, were planted. Having performed her pleasing duties, and declared that the trees were planted, three cheers were called for Miss Carrington, which was lustily responded to. His Honor was then loudly cheered, and after three cheers for the Recreation Ground Board, the ceremony was brought to a conclusion by the band playing the National Anthem.

As it was announced that after the ceremony anyone could plant trees that choose, the place assumed quite an active appearance and all along the walk might be seen persons in groups busy at work planting different kinds of trees the growth of which we have no doubt will be as carefully watched and cared for as if they were in their own gardens. When the Public Domain, as we may call it, is visited by their grand-children or great-grand-children, they will be able to point with pride to the trees which then will be of large size, and say they were planted by their ancestors. The ground we understand has been turned over in readiness to receive the contributions of visitors, and now presents quite a garden-like appearance from the number of shrubs and flowering plants brought to the grounds and set by visitors. For the remainder of the week a man will be employed in the grounds getting ready for the reception of other contributions. There is some talk amongst the Recreation Board Committee of inviting persons during the week to continue taking up suitable plants which they may either set themselves in places pointed out, or which will be taken charge of by the gardener. We hope there will be a large number of such visitors.