

A Chief gives an account of the visit to Queen Victoria on 15 July 1863

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Our readers are aware that the party of New Zealanders have been received by the Queen, as well as by the Prince and Princess of Wales, and we have received a verbatim translation of a communication received from one of the chiefs, expressing, in their own unaffected fashion, their feelings at what they saw and at the kindness and hospitality shown to them when they visited her Majesty at Osborne:-

On the 15th of July, at seven A.M., we went by rail to have an interview with her Majesty. The Duke of Newcastle accompanied us. The train took us to Portsmouth, where her Majesty's yacht awaited us to take us across. A boat and crew was ready for us, commanded by an officer. When the officer saw us he saluted us in the English manner. We were then pulled off to the yacht, which is a most beautiful vessel. The yacht took us to the Queen's residence.

Three of her Majesty's carriages had been sent to the pier to take us up to Osborne. These carriages were most splendidly fitted up. Into them I, a mean man, entered and was taken to the Queen's house. We went in, and prepared to receive her Majesty when she came forward. When we were ready our gracious Queen came to us. We saluted her in the way the rulers are accustomed to be saluted (kissed hands). When we had finished paying our homage, she addressed us in good and peaceful terms.

Feelings of sympathy towards her and her children crowded into my mind, on account of their loss in the death of Prince Albert; tears moistened by eyelashes. She then went back. When requested to return, she acceded. Then my elder brother, Hautakin Wharepapa, [sic], addressed her, with feelings of great joy. When he had ended, I stepped forward to speak to her. My heart was filled with affection towards her. It was only with difficulty that I could express myself, so full of sympathy was I for her loss in Prince Albert, her consort. She then retired to her private apartment, and we went to take luncheon in another room.

After lunch we were invited to view her Majesty's apartments. Then we were pulled back to the yacht Victoria and Albert. When our boat was cast off the officers came forward to salute us. We returned the salute. When we had finished inspecting the yacht, we steamed across to Portsmouth, where we spent the night.

In the morning we went to look at the steamers in course of building and other things of the English. I cannot recount the things that we saw. Afterwards we pulled off to a large war steamer. When we reached it we climbed up the side. The officers and sailors appeared like statues. Their eyebrows, eyes, and lips had an angry expression. When we had finished, we pulled away again to another place to see the biscuit manufactory. The manager came and led us over the factory to see its contents. The things we saw there were most splendid. Who can tell the beauty of the things we saw there? When we had finished inspecting this, my eyes being also satisfied, we pulled off to another man-of-war. The officer saw us approaching. He was a very agreeable man. He saluted us much and then conducted us to the captain. The ladies there received us very kindly. We then sat down on the seats, and a repast was spread before us to signify their love for us.

We were then taken to see the boys training; some to handle fire-arms, others to play on instruments. The works on that ship were very pleasing. After this we were rowed away to another man-of-war, the captain of which saluted us kindly. Then we returned to the hotel.

And at seven o'clock we came back to our lodgings in London. Although I had returned to my lodgings my heart was full of affection for the Queen; and I gave vent to my feelings thus:- Your Majesty the Queen, I salute you and your children, who are widowed and orphans through the death of Prince Albert. It is well, your Majesty; he has gone to God's right hand. Pray rather, your Majesty, for those who are in the world. It is the wicked that will perish. Enough. This is a lament for Prince Albert:- Is there no love, indeed, gushing up in my breast towards the Prince? Blessed art thou who has passed behind the hills! Firm shall I stand, as a sacred sign for the Queen. Alas! That is all. From Kissling te Tuahu. (Translated by G. Maunsell)