

the unaccountable action of the authorities in Auckland in refusing to give the Native team the requisite ammunition, the trip had to be abandoned at the last moment." A reception had been prepared, with the Naval Hall all decorated with nikau palms and ferns, "while the company's colours, which had been presented to the Navals in 1870 by the ladies of Thames, and had never been out in public since the expedition to Parihaka (1881) until yesterday's Church Parade, were displayed, alongside the Queen's own colours." As all arrangements for supper had been made, Captain W.H. Potts and Lieut. Sommerville presided over a convivial evening, with the Navals and their Band and some friends.

It appeared by November 11 that the lack of ammunition for No. 1 Natives had been due to Maori trouble in North Auckland, causing stringent regulations about supplying arms and ammunition to any "Natives" whatsoever.

On December 19, 1898, there was a long report of the opening of the railway at Thames, with the town a-flutter with flags.

"The Thames Naval Volunteers, with their Band, under command of Captain Potts, and the Hauraki Rifles, under Lieutenant Radford, paraded at the Naval Hall, and marched to the Railway Station, and by noon there was a very large concourse of spectators. The police, under Sergeant Gillies, together with the Volunteers, under Captain Grant, assisted to keep people off the line."

"The children sang two verses of "My Own New Zealand Home," to the music of the Navals Band, Mr. Grigg conducting. (John Grigg had composed the song, about Thames, in the early 1870s, and it had similarly figured, to a Volunteer Band, at the turning of the first sod on December 21, 1878.) "The children, to the number of about 2,000, were taken to Matatoki by train."

A big number of adults then went by train to Te Aroha. "Its Domain was filled by Thames visitors, its ears by the Thames Naval Band (which, under Bandmaster Smith, discoursed splendid music, both enroute and at Te Aroha).

Te Aroha reported, "If the baths proved a great attraction to the weary Thames folk, their band - the famous Navals - filled us with envy. The Navals marched up Whitaker Street, followed by half the population, and played the excursionists on board." The Te Aroha people thought they should do something "about placing our local musicians on a better footing."

There was subsequently a complaint that the children at the railway opening were "boxed up in a long row of carriages," so that "My Own New Zealand Home" could hardly be heard, and arrangements were accordingly made for a repeat performance on the Waiokaraka (later Central) School grounds, again with the Band of the Thames Navals.

Another account said, "A valiant effort was put forth in the rendition of 'My Own New Zealand Home,' followed by the National Anthem, but the conflict of voice, unavoidable in such circumstances, rather neutralised the effect. Still, every one recognised the good intention, and gave credit accordingly." (This was at the actual opening.) (As to "conflict of voices," the number who had actually rehearsed, to lead the others, a few days before, came to only 100.)

The number of Volunteers was much smaller than in 1878.

The New Year of 1899 was full of railway excursions, including one recorded on January 3, of the Thames Naval Band to Rotorua. They stopped at Lake View House, under a Mr. and Mrs. Seddon, the same name as Premier Seddon, so a nearby hot spring where the Band had a good hot bath was called the "Premier." On the way back they looked in at Te Aroha, and joined a crowded excursion train returning to Thames. "The return journey was a very pleasant one, being enlivened by the Naval Band, under Bandmaster Smith - they had been on a visit to Rotorua, where the brilliamcy of their playing astonished the natives."

On January 21 it was noted Thames half holiday was being left at Thursday.

On February 22, 1899, it was reported that the Thames Naval Band went to entertain Tapu, and "the visitors proceeded to enjoy themselves by a stroll on the beach and a dip in the briny." They would have gone by ship.

March 2 had a report that the Thames Miners' Union had a Monster railway excursion and athletic sports, with excursions from Coromandel (by water), Te Aroha, Karangahake and Waitekauri, combining in a Monster Demonstration, for the 9th anniversary, with a Band a sine qua non.