

Class C. ~~1234~~ 1234
Royal Empire Essay
Competition.

Ray King - Turner
Correspondence School,
Wellington,
New Zealand.

Class C.

Age, 11 years, 5 months.

Legends and Traditions of
My Country.

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Before the white man came to this beautiful country, New Zealand, the land was inhabited by the Maoris, a race of brown-skinned people. Their history was kept, not in written records, but in songs and stories told by the old to the young. These stories were about the mountains and rivers, about taniwha and other strange creatures, and about Maoris of 'god-like origin who could bend nature their will. Here is a

story of Maui, a Maori hero who had ensnared the sun, to make the days and nights of reasonable length and who now fished up the North Island of New Zealand in this way.

Maui, though very clever, was often lazy. He had just had one of his lazy fits, and his wives and children were hungry and complaining. At last Maui took up his carved fish-hook, made from the jawbone of his grandmother and tied it to a strong flax fishing-line. He hid himself in his

brothers' canoe and did not show himself until they were well out to sea. His angry brothers would have turned back, but Maui's magic forced them on.

When it came time to fish, Maui's brothers would not give him any bait, so he smeared the hook with blood from his own nose. As the line descended, the hook caught in the door of the sea-god's house. The line jerked, and amidst foam and swirling eddies, Maui slowly hauled in his prize. It broke the surface, the house with a big

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piece of land sticking
to it from the bottom
of the sea, turned into
a fish by the magic
of Maui.

The hero hurried
to sacrifice to the gods
and give each of them
a portion of the great
fish. But during his
absence the brothers
leapt from their canoe,
and began to hack and
slash at Maui's monster.
In its pain, the creature
squirmed and thrashed
about, wrinkling its
skin, and destroying
its smooth surface.

When Maui came
back he was angry for
his lovely fish-island

was spoiled. But that is how the North Island with its mountains and valleys came into existence.

Another Maori hero was Kupe, traveller and explorer. He brought with him to New Zealand a clever swimming bird, Te Kawau a Toru, who tested swift waters, and currents for the safer passage of Kupe's canoe. So the North of the South Island lies a swift and dangerous waterway, now known as French Pass, then as Te Aumiti. Te Kawau was taken there to test his strength against the

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swirling whirlpools. He started to swim against the current, whilst the tide was flowing, but almost at once his wing was broken and as its tip touched the water, it was dragged under.

Now the greedy torrent seized Te Haurau, and he was drowned. The gods took pity on him, and changed his bones into a reef, which lies across the Pass, but where his broken wing drooped into the water, there is a clear channel, through which ships may safely proceed.

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Often the Maoris called on their gods to help them, when they were in trouble. The story of Hinepoupou, the woman who was carried by the sea god back to her own people is one of this kind.

Hinepoupou's husband was tired of her, and wished to replace her by a younger, fairer bride. To rid himself of his unwanted wife, the husband took her with him, on an expedition to Kapiti Island, and by means of a trick, he managed to leave her behind.

Hinepoupou

decided to undertake the thirty mile swim to the South Island where her own people lived. Trusting that the gods would help her, and guided by good omens, she dived off the southern tip of Kapiti, and swam bravely, a dark speck in the wide expanse of water. Before long the old sea god, taking the form of a grey dolphin appeared beside her, and lifting her on his back, he carried her the remainder of her journey.

Once safely ashore, Hinepoupu awaited her revenge. One day

she saw her faithless husband going out fishing. She prayed to her gods to repay this wicked man. At once a storm arose, the canoe was overturned, and the husband drowned.

One of New Zealand most honoured traditions, though its newest, is that of Anzac. On Sunday April 25th, 1915, New Zealand and Australian troops forced a landing in the face of the Turkish enemy at Gallipoli. Many of our men lost their lives, but the bravery of all of them was unsurpassed, and the landing was made at last.

There are many stories of the courage and endurance of the troops, such as that of Simpson, and his donkey, Murphy, who rescued under fire, many wounded men, and that of Sir Bernard Freyberg, who swam ashore before the landing to light flares to mislead the Turks.

These are only a few of New Zealand's stories. There are many others, old and new, of valour and skill, of warriors and scholars. We are fortunate in this country, that Maori and Pakeha live together in so friendly a fashion, so that the old stories

Quite

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will not be lost, and,
alongside the new ones,
will serve as an ins-
piration for future gener-
ations.