

state from the want of food, and it is not at all improbable that this scarcity of food may have some influence on the health of the Natives, as many of them are suffering from disease, and several have recently died.

With respect to the public works undertaken by the Natives, I have much pleasure in reporting that considerable improvements have already been made between Maketu and Rotoiti, and still further alterations are now in progress at the Waiwhakareto and Te Hunua, where they were urgently required. The approaches to the site of the intended bridge at the Taheke have been completed, and other substantial improvements have been made between the Taheke and Rotorua. The contract formerly entered into between Ngatiwhakaue and the Government for constructing a road from Waiteti to Te Hemo has been lately completed under the supervision of Mr. Jordan. Another contract has also been completed by Ngatirangiwewehi and other hapu between Waiteti and the original contract entered into between Ngaterangiwewehi and the Government for the forest section of the road. I have still further pleasure in stating that the contract lately entered into between Tuhourangi and the Government between Te Hemo and the site of the intended bridge on the Waikato, after having been in treaty for some months, is now in rapid course of progress, more so than any other contract entered into by Natives during my experience, and I have no hesitation in stating that, weather permitting, in the course of six weeks from this date the said contract will be complete, bridges excepted.

I have, &c.,
F. E. HAMLIN,
Resident Magistrate.

No. 8.

The RESIDENT MAGISTRATE, Opotiki, to the Hon. the NATIVE MINISTER, Wellington.

SIR,—

Opotiki, Bay of Plenty, 24th, June 1872.

I have the honor to submit the following general report on Native matters in the Opotiki District, for the last half year.

During the time I have been here I have visited nearly all the settlements, some of them several times, and have endeavored to make myself as conversant with the Natives as practicable in so short a time.

The health of the Natives has been good during the past half year, they have been visited by no epidemic, and the deaths have been few. The most noticeable death is that of Renata Te Purewa, a Chief of Ruatahuna, which occurred at Whakatane last month. Children appear to be plentiful and healthy, and I certainly see no signs, here at least, of the Maori race becoming extinct.

Hauhauism appears to be dying out, and I think the Natives are now recovering from the license and immoral habits engendered by it, and in a great measure have returned to their former customs and ideas. Christian baptism is now sought for their children by those who only a few years or months ago professed Hauhauism, and Christian worship is now the custom at many settlements.

No crimes of any importance, which could be traced to the Native race, have been reported to me. I regret to have to state, however, that drunkenness is very prevalent amongst them, the chiefs in some cases being lamentably addicted to it. There is also just now a great wish to establish amongst themselves licensed houses for the sale of fermented and spirituous liquors.

The land in the district is very productive, and large quantities of wheat, maize, and potatoes, are grown annually by the Natives, but the crops during the past season have been but scanty, more especially the potatoes and maize, the former of which were injured by the drought, and the latter by a severe gale of wind. As an instance, the Natives at Te Kaha and the neighborhood last year had four hundred bags of maize for sale, while this year, from a greater breadth sown, they do not expect to have half that quantity. With the Whakatohea and Ngaitai, the result was the same. The Kumera crop, on which the Bay of Plenty Natives in a great measure depend for food is, however, a good one, and will make up to some extent for the deficiency of the others. The Natives, although I hope there will be no actual want amongst them, must necessarily be in somewhat straitened circumstances this winter, and following spring.

A good many ploughs have been purchased by the Natives lately, and I believe a greater breadth of wheat than usual will be put in this seed time.

The Whanau a Maru, and the Whanau a Te Hutu tribes, had five boats engaged in whaling last season, and I am informed netted no less than two hundred pounds after paying all expenses. Incited by this, all the Coast tribes, including the Ngaitai, intend to follow this pursuit during the coming season.

The Ngaitai are now engaged under the Public Works Department in improving and altering the road from Opotiki to Torere and beyond it. They have only begun the work this month, so that but thirty to forty chains of road formation is all that they have yet completed.

It has been found impossible for the surrendered Urewera to commence the contemplated road work at Ohiwa until the wet season has passed.

Some Natives are employed by the contractor, together with Europeans, on the Opotiki and Otara road.

The Whanau a Apanui, Whanau a Maru, and Whanau a Te Hutu tribes, are very desirous of being employed on Public Works, and I trust the Government may see their way to allow them to earn money in this manner, either on the Opotiki and Poverty Bay road, or on any other which may be determined on, I would point out that in consequence of the deficiency of the harvest, Natives are very anxious to obtain work, and will accept it at lower wages than they would in a more fruitful season.

I have observed house building and other Native industries going on in every settlement; and in some cases large and ornamental buildings are being put up. Te Tatana has his large Runanga house at Maraenui nearly completed.