

The opinions I have heard expressed by the Natives all point to a continuance of the friendly relations which at present exist between them and the Government. There is no doubt that those formerly in rebellion appreciate the blessings of peace after years of hardship and privation.

Of the Natives, lately noted rebels, but now living quietly and in apparent contentment, I may instance Hira Te Popo, who now lives in the Town belt of Opotiki, cultivating the hundred acres of fine land reserved for him by the Government, and sending his children to an European school. Wi Hura, who is living with the last named, Nepia Tokitahi, lately the Lieutenant of Te Kooti, who is at Opape under the surveillance of Wiremu Kingi; Hemi Kakitu, who is living at Ohiwa, and who has applied to purchase back from the Government a favorite spot of the lately confiscated land; and Erueti Tamaikowha, who often visits this settlement from Te Waimana, where he is turning his attention to the rearing of cattle.

The service of Native orderlies lately instituted by the Government from Mangapowhata and Ruatahuna to Opotiki, has hitherto been well maintained, and will, I believe, tend to the preservation of friendly relations with the Urewera and other inland tribes. I cannot say that I believe the inland Urewera are well disposed towards the Government, but at least they have ceased to be in active opposition.

A considerable number of Natives, including representatives from all the tribes, either have gone, or are going to a large meeting at Mataahu, for which invitations have been issued by Major Kopata Wahawaha.

All through the district I have found the Natives civil and obliging in manner, hospitable to Europeans, and very willing to submit all their disputes (not only those with Europeans, but also those amongst themselves,) to my decision, and to abide by that decision when given.

The principal subjects I have heard discussed at the Native "kainga" lately, are Representation, Land disputes, Road Boards, and Confiscated Lands. Great attention is given to Native Parliamentary representation. Some are of opinion that they are not fairly represented in Parliament in proportion to their numbers, and that there should be more Maori members in the House, whilst others are of opinion that the Parliament should not deal with matters affecting the Native race only, but that these should be arranged by a Native Council. Akin to the subject of the Native Council is the question, "How are Native land disputes to be settled?" of which there are more than one of long standing in this district (as where are there not?) Many Natives think that the "Council," if established, could deal with these cases. The Native Land Court is unpopular, on account of the expense attending it, which in Native idea is unnecessary; they also think its machinery cumbersome.

The Native Road Boards Act passed last session has not in any instance been adopted in this district, indeed the Natives feel much aggrieved at having to pay road rates where they own land within a European Road District, as at Opotiki. It is not surprising that they should kick at their first experience of direct taxation, but they will doubtless in time acknowledge the benefits of the system.

There has been an attempt lately (originated by some Napier Natives) to get up a movement among the Bay of Plenty tribes to petition Parliament to return them all the confiscated lands, and it was endeavored to organise a political agitation for this purpose. I am able to say that this movement met with no success from Opotiki to the East Cape, even amongst those whose lands have been confiscated. In the Urewera country and at Whakatane this question is being much discussed, but the majority of the Natives I have no doubt fully understand that it is not only inexpedient, but impossible, for the Government or the Parliament to return them the confiscated lands as a whole, and I need hardly say that I have lost no opportunity of impressing this on them.

Much of my time since my arrival in this district has been spent in the endeavour to establish Schools, under the Native Schools Acts. I have urged on the Natives, to the best of my ability, that they should establish and support these Schools, because I am really of opinion that educating them will do much to preserve the peace of the country in future years, by enabling them to fight out their battle with the white man in the forum instead of in the field. I am happy to say that I have made considerable progress in the matter of Schools. The Ngaitai have given a site and promised subscriptions towards the erection of a Schoolhouse; the Te Kaha Natives have done the same; the Whakatohea have set apart a site for the same purpose, and promised labour, and though unable from their poverty (caused by the war) to give money now, I doubt not that as they recover themselves they will be able to pay for their children's education. I hope in a short time to be able to report that these three schools are in operation.

A School has lately been established in Opotiki, which, although it is to be carried on under the Provincial system, and not under the Native Schools Acts, will yet be attended by Natives as well as Europeans. Though at present only in a temporary building, and not fully in operation, already ten Maori children attend this School, and I hope to see the number augmented shortly.

In conclusion, perhaps I may be permitted to express my surprise and pleasure in visiting the settlements of the Natives on this coast, to find them so much more prosperous than their countrymen in other parts of the Island. Notwithstanding that these tribes have all felt the effects of the late struggle, whether engaged in it or not, yet I find them in possession of many horses, carts, ploughs, boats, indeed of everything which a Maori counts as wealth. There are exceptions to this rule, among the latest surrendered, but these will doubtless recover themselves rapidly, however much the late poor harvest is against them. In no district have I seen greater apparent good feeling to exist between the races notwithstanding the recent struggle.

If Cook's name for this district is not too appropriate this year, it is yet more so than such hastily given names usually are, and if the blessing of peace is vouchsafed, years of prosperity should be before both Europeans and Natives in the Bay of Plenty.

I have, &c.,

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Resident Magistrate.

The Hon. the Native Minister, Wellington.