

at the south end of the lake at Tokaanu and Rotoaira, being more fortunate regarding the quality of their land, are commencing to turn it to good account; although, from the deplorably low condition they got into during the occupation of their country by the enemy, it will take them some time to fairly rally again.

A good flour mill is just erected, to which Government aid has been rendered, and a trade in oats, potatoes, &c., has sprung up with the township at the opposite end of the lake, at Tapuaeharuru, for the supply of the Armed Constabulary Force and the hotels, &c. The Maoris at Tokaanu were greatly delighted on the occasion of the first sale of a few bushels of oats and some oaten straw to the Europeans. The steamer "The Victoria" that is now launched on the lake, and the cutter the "Lady of the Lake," will tend greatly to stimulate the Natives to the cultivation of their lands; and should the knowledge of the curative properties of the Taupo warm springs become more circulated, and the number of visitors increase, the rich lands around Tokaanu will soon be reclaimed from their present waste. The formation of a road round the lake from Tapuaeharuru to Tokaanu, and on to Rotoaira, Patea, and Whanganui, is much required. The survey of a portion of it as far as Tokaanu is commenced, a special settlement at which place, or at Rotoaira, would tend greatly to the development of the resources of the interior and to the pacification of the Island. Substantial bridges over the Waikato River at Tapuaeharuru and Atiamuri have been built, and the road from one to the other is completed. All the troubles in reference thereto are now of the past. Much of the success of this work is due to the tact and patience with the Natives shown by Mr. Bold, the Government Engineer, under whose sole direction these works, and also the road from Napier to Taupo, were carried out, principally with Native labour. The road through from Atiamuri to Cambridge is only required to complete the connection between Wellington and Auckland. Messrs. Davis and Mitchell, agents for the negotiation of lands for Government, have been very successful in acquiring large tracts of land in this district and the adjoining Arawa country. There are no schools at present in the district, but preparations are going on for the erection of one, promised to the Natives by His Excellency the Governor, on his late visit to the district.

Tuhoe, or Uriwera.

Hidden away amidst a portion of the roughest forest-clad mountainous country to be found in the island, living secluded for ages, may be found here, perhaps in greater perfection than in any other part of the country, the true type of what the Maori was some thirty or forty years ago. The Uriwera have always been looked upon by the surrounding tribes as the "Children of the Mist." Here, perhaps, may be found the traditions of the Maori less changed by contact with foreigners than in any other part. They still boast of their descent from the aboriginal inhabitants, Te Marangaranga, &c., who occupied the country prior to the arrival of the traditionary canoes, viz., the Arawa, the Matatua, &c., in the latter of which, they state, some of their own ancestors arrived. This tribe has been connected with the enemy in every outbreak since the commencement of the Taranaki and Waikato wars. It was the Uriwera who fought so bravely at Orakau, where they also lost many of their tribe. According to their own estimate, 160 men have fallen in the different engagements in which they have taken part. It was here Te Kooti took refuge for so long, till he fled to the Waikato. I have visited Ruatahuna, the principal settlement of the tribe, twice during the past year, and met on each occasion the greatest civility, and heard the desire expressed by the people to remain on friendly terms with the Government. They say of the Waikato, that when they (the Waikato) were in need of help, and sent for them, they went at once, and fought for them; but afterwards, when they (the Uriwera) required help, and applied to Waikato for assistance, none was rendered them. They therefore consider themselves free. Although these Natives have submitted, and, to all appearance, desire to live at peace, yet there is a latent suspicion amongst them that the desire of the European is to get possession of their lands. A strong desire is also evinced on their part to get back those lands that have been included in the confiscated blocks, and, in the hope of gaining this point, they have been led on by rumours that were circulated during the last Session of the Assembly. This question was brought up by them at the last meeting at Ruatahuna, when they were distinctly told that such would not be the case; that the lands on the Whakatane side, in the Bay of Plenty, had passed into the hands of private parties; that on the Wairoa and Waikaremoana side, the Government had taken a certain portion; the remainder had been handed back by Major Biggs, acting for the Government, and to settle the disputed title to it, they and the Ngatikahungunu had better take it through the Native Lands Court; and with regard to the land at Whaiti, in the neighbourhood of Fort Galatea, it belonged to themselves and the adjoining tribes, and had never been confiscated.

I have, in going to and from Ruatahuna, travelled the three principal roads through that district, viz., by Waikaremoana and Huiarau Road, the Ahikereru Road, and by the bed of the Whakatane stream, and found but slight difference in the difficulties to be overcome. In their present state they are execrable, but without many engineering difficulties in the way. I think a fair bridle-track could be made from Fort Galatea, by way of Ahikereru and what is called Arawhakawhiri and Tarapounamu Road. The present track follows the bed of the Okahu and the Manawakiwi streams. If the Uriwera could be induced to undertake this work, and clear away some of the principal obstacles on the other roads named—and I do not consider they will continue their present opposition to such an undertaking for any length of time,—and, further, to take employment on the many public works going on around them, one of the chief difficulties to the advancement and pacification of the country would be removed.

The Uriwera at present are not willing that a school should be started at Ruatahuna, although they express a desire that their children should attend the Whakatane Maori school. I found a desire growing that a few of their leading men, such as Paerau, Whenuanui, Kereru Te Pukenui, Tamaikowha, Heteraka, Tipihau, and Ihaka should be appointed assessors. I would only state, further, in reference to this tribe, closed up as they are in their mountain fastnesses, wedged in between the rising settlements of the East Coast and the open plains of Taupo and the Waikato country, that too much stress cannot be laid on the importance of the position they hold, and the necessity of paying an extra amount