

of attention to whatever will tend to ameliorate their condition and open up the country. Agriculture is in a very backward state here: I doubt whether there be a plough in the district; if there is, it is not used, all the labour being done by hand, with a few spades and the old Maori *kō*, although with these primitive tools they contrive, through the light nature of the soil they have to work, to grow large quantities of potatoes, maize, and sufficient tobacco (*torori*) for their own use, but none for sale; and it is doubtful whether a dozen iron pots or other European household articles so essential for cooking, &c., could be found, the ancient oven or *hangi* answering for all purposes, with flax baskets for dishes, &c.

Their religion is that taught to them by Te Kooti, being a short service morning and evening, in which all join, the only ceremony being a short prayer repeated by the priest, followed by a chant, by the whole congregation, of a string of verses culled from the Bible. No missionary visits these people.

Physically, the Uriwera, appear to be a fine, healthy people, and morally, compare favourably with most other tribes. I know no place where there are so many children in proportion to the adult population. This may be partly accounted for by the large number of elders killed during the late wars.

Patea.

This part of the country, like the Uriwera district, although not formerly in this district, has lately, as regards matters connected with the Native Lands Act, been most inconveniently added, the Uriwera country properly belonging to the Opotiki district, and Patea to Whanganui.

The Natives of this part of the country have continued loyal through all the late disturbances. Of all parts of the interior of this Island, it is doubtful if a more suitable position, as regards extent, quantity, and quality of land, could be found, for the purposes of special or other settlement, than that stretching from Tokaanu, at the south end of Taupo Lake, on to Rotoaira, Rangipo, Karioi, and Murimotu Plains, and on to Patea, a country of over half a million acres in extent, of level and undulating land, backed by well-grassed hills for runs, with plenty of excellent timber, and well watered, affording plenty of scope for all.

There are no great obstacles to forming a good road from Taupo to Whanganui and Palmerston, and to Napier by way of Patea. Some disputes are going on, in reference to tribal boundaries, between the Whanganuis and the tribes of Ngatiwhiti and Ngatitama, living on the land, but not of a very serious nature. Europeans have commenced occupying the country, by leasing from the Natives, some 30,000 sheep being already on the ground, besides cattle. One of the Natives (Henare Kaka) has a small flock of sheep, to which he pays much attention. Renata Kawepo, also, in partnership with a European, is stocking a large run at Owahaoko, adjoining the Omahu school endowment. This endowment, of some 60,000 acres, has been surveyed, and will be leased by public auction forthwith. The few Natives who reside at Patea are a healthy, thriving lot of people, paying much attention to agriculture. They are Christians, but there being no churches or schools, they send their children to the Omahu school to be educated.

I consider it a mistaken idea that the Maoris are dying out rapidly: it is the case in certain localities, but in others, if they are not on the increase, that rapid disappearance which seemed probable a short time back, is checked, more especially so in those places where no sudden change in their habits or manner of living has occurred, but where time has been allowed for them to some extent to prepare themselves. One of the rising generation of Maoris is an essentially different man from the generation now passing away. He has not acquired the habits of the past, nor unfortunately has he learnt many of the more useful requirements for the future. He lives too often a useless, monotonous state of existence, excepting when excited in plotting some mischief. The sooner, for his sake and the good of the Colony, that the country becomes opened up and settled, the better, and that to obtain any of the luxuries he sees around him, he be forced, through the example set by industrious settlers, to learn how to do so advantageously.

I think if every inducement possible were held out to the Natives to take contracts on the public works going on, and encouragement given to the young men to take work under European contractors, some good might come of it, more especially with the Uriwera, and others situated in a like position. To do this effectually it would be necessary to circulate, in the Maori language, copies of such tenders as they would be likely to take. Much of the road work and metalling in Hawke's Bay was done by Maori contractors in an efficient manner. Less law and more physical and mental training in the arts of peace are required.

Little opportunity has yet offered to test the working of the new Native Lands Act.

There is a question in reference to tenants' rights or improvement clauses not touched upon in the Act, which, if made compulsory in the long leases, so that the lessee could feel certain of being recouped for permanent improvements, would tend much to benefit the country without injury to the Maori.

The village schools will, it is to be hoped, by teaching the rising generation the English language, help to do away with any antagonistic feeling of race. One of the greatest obstacles in carrying out the school system is the difficulty of obtaining fitting schoolmasters.

The census of the Maori population that has lately been taken is a step in the right direction, if it were followed up by all officers in Native districts keeping a register, in which, as far as possible, all births and deaths, &c., should be entered, the next census would be much nearer correct than can possibly be the case with this one, besides the great service of such a register in regard to claims to land, &c. A statistical return of all varieties and quantities of crops grown by Natives, with amount disposed of, would also be useful.

Speaking generally, I consider the Natives of the East Coast and Taupo districts to be settling down quietly after their many years of excitement, and are beginning in earnest to appreciate the blessings of peace.

I have, &c.,
S. LOCKE