

1874.

NEW ZEALAND.

FURTHER REPORTS FROM OFFICERS IN NATIVE DISTRICTS.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by command of His Excellency.

No. 1.

The RESIDENT MAGISTRATE, Maketu, to the UNDER SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,— Resident Magistrate's Office, Maketu, 19th June, 1874.

I have the honor to report, for the information of His Excellency's Government, that the aspect of Native affairs in the district under my charge is satisfactory.

1. I must remark, with regard to the reputed loyalty of the Arawa as a whole, that the Tuhourangi, one of the strongest tribes, have of late endeavoured to establish a system of self-government, by forming a sect called Putaiki, the literal meaning of which is concentration or unity of strength, coinciding with the old proverb, "Unity is strength," and taken from the backbone, which, being the concentration of the ribs and supporting the human frame, causes it to become a body. I am, however, of opinion that this will die a natural death.

2. At the great political meeting held at Ohinemutu on the 27th April last, the subjects brought forward by Ngatiwhakaue for discussion were, in the opinion of the whole of the visitors, including James Mackay, jun., Esq., Agent for the General Government, and myself, indicative of a strong desire to support the King.

3. The Native Assessors' Court at Ohinemutu, which I took much trouble to establish for the purpose of trying cases admissible under the Native Circuit Courts Act, has been neglected since September last, in consequence of which a runanga has been since established, to which the Assessors give their support.

4. A land dispute of considerable importance and of long standing between the Ngatituara, a hapu connected both with Ngatiwhakaue and Ngatiraukawa, and the Ngatiwahiao, a section of Tuhourangi, was investigated by officers appointed by the Government, the result of which is not yet declared. I am not, therefore, in a position to report the effect it will have on the Native mind.

5. I have not been called upon by any hapu or tribe to arbitrate on any question of land dispute, but several cases have arisen which are at present in abeyance.

6. The moral condition of the Natives is on a par with that of last year. No serious cases of larceny or assault have arisen. The civil cases also have on the whole been of a trivial nature.

7. The mortality of the district has, during the last year, been of the usual average, no contagious disorder having visited us. There have been two cases of scalding in the Ngawhas (boiling springs) of Ohinemutu, both arising from the indiscretion of the individuals themselves, and no blame is attachable to any person in either instance. In one case, that of an European, the result was fatal; in the other, that of a Maori, he recovered.

8. There are at present established in this district five Native Schools. The Matata School, under Mr. and Mrs. Creeke, the oldest but one established in this portion of the colony, has been progressing favourably, as is evident from the improvement made by the children in the several branches of education as well as the increased number of scholars who attend the school.

9. The Maketu School, under the control of Mr. and Mrs. Rudman, I am sorry to say I cannot report upon so favourably, the number of attending children having considerably fallen off. This may arise from several of the pupils having gone to Ohinemutu to their former teacher, Mr. Tait. The Inspector of Schools, H. W. Brabant, Esq., Resident Magistrate, Opotiki, on his last visit informed me that he remarked a very slight improvement (if any) in the scholars' knowledge.

10. The Rotoiti School, formerly under the charge of Major Woods, but now under Mr. Davis, has made fair progress during the time of the former master, but latterly the number of children attending there has decreased very considerably.

11. The Ohinemutu School, only established since the commencement of the year, under the supervision of Mr. and Mrs. Tait, formerly of Maketu, has, considering the difficulties they have had to contend with, made rapid progress. On the occasion of the visit of His Excellency the Right Hon. Sir James Fergusson, Bart., he examined the school and expressed his gratification at the advancement made in so short a time. The present schoolroom is a mere shed, the roof being scarcely water-tight, and until recently the walls were bare and exposed, and are even now only temporarily covered in. Having lately succeeded in securing a convenient site for a schoolhouse, I trust the Government will take early steps to have a suitable and permanent building erected.