

12. The Wairoa School, of which Dr. Cowan is master, has also made fair progress, considering the disadvantages under which it has laboured, as, during the Horohoro land dispute and the political meeting at Tama-te-Kapua, the children accompanied their parents who attended those gatherings, thus closing the school for a period of about six weeks. It has also suffered from the absence of the master on several occasions, who, being a medical man, has been called upon to attend serious cases in various parts of the district.

13. In agricultural pursuits there has been a decided improvement during the last year, but the potato and wheat crops at Maketu were failures. The cause of the potato crop turning out so badly was evidently the result of the drought, and, as regards the wheat, I am under the impression that, from repeated cropping, the land is thoroughly exhausted, whereas at Te Puke, a few miles up the Kaituna River, the wheat harvest was a complete success, the result in some instances being thirty (30) bushels to the acre. I have been informed that some of the wheat exported from here fetched a higher price in the Auckland market than that sent from Tauranga. Nevertheless, comparing the quantity reaped with the amount sown, the amount will be found to be small. This may have arisen from the fact that, the season being far advanced, they were in a great hurry, and the land was not sufficiently dressed. On the other hand, however, they have succeeded in securing large crops of maize, and it is estimated they will have a large quantity to dispose of. There is a great demand at present amongst them for seed oats.

14. As regards public works, I have not much to report upon. A branch road has been formed connecting the Tauranga and Taupo roads with Ohinemutu, but the bridge over the Utuhina Creek is still wanting. A bridge across the Puarenga has recently been completed, by which the old Maketu Road will join the Tauranga and Taupo Road. A portion of the road between Maketu and Rotorua is impassable for vehicles, and requires immediate attention. A new branch road to Tarawera or Wairoa is now in course of construction, and when completed carriages of all descriptions will be able to be driven to the banks of the Tarawera Lake. This will be a great boon to tourists visiting Rotomahana.

15. The telegraph line from Opotiki to Maketu has lately been completed, and only waits for the office at the former settlement to be finished to place us *en rapport* with it. I have much pleasure in stating that the Matata Natives are deserving of commendation for the very energetic manner in which they carried out the various contracts they undertook in constructing this line, together with the assistance they rendered to the Government.

I have, &c.,

F. E. HAMLIN,

Resident Magistrate.

The Under Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

No. 2.

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

SIR,—

Waiapu, 13th June, 1874.

I have the honor to forward, for the information of the Hon. the Native Minister; the following report of the general condition of the Native population of this district during the past year:—

The continuance of the Ngatiporou in loyalty and peacefulness, together with a decided advancement in civilization, and conformity to European habits, is deserving of commendation. The almost entire absence of crime shows a great improvement in their moral condition. The chief offences against the law continue to be horse and sheep stealing, as well as other petty thefts, the perpetrators being generally idle, good-for-nothing young men, who are too lazy to work for their living. Several of these offenders have been sent to gaol at various times, but it does not appear to do them much good; in fact, some of them have rather relished their gaol life. I have suggested to the Assessors that a more satisfactory way of making an example of these characters would be to sentence them to stated periods of labour upon the roads, which I consider would, by exhibiting them as culprits before their own people, be a greater disgrace, and prove a more effective means of withholding them from a repetition of their offence.

A general desire is expressed that a small body of regular police should be stationed at a central point, such as Te Awanui, for the purpose of more effectually detecting and bringing to justice these offenders. The three Native policemen, living at long distances apart, are of very little avail for the security of property. In this desire I entirely concur, as it would very greatly strengthen the hands of the Magistrate, and more satisfactorily attain the ends of justice.

A Court-room is also very much required. A room in my own private residence has for the last eight years supplied this deficiency, but it is extremely inconvenient, and family arrangements are often much interrupted in consequence.

Only one land dispute of any consequence has occurred during the last year, happily without any serious results. The Ngatipuui and the Ngatihoroai each lay claim to a block of land lying between Te Awanui and the Waiapu River. It has been in dispute, like many other blocks, for some years, and only becomes violent when a man of either hapu attempts to take possession of any portion of it. Such was the case this year, and party feeling ran so high that, had the rifles not been in safe keeping at Te Awanui, the consequences might have been similar to those of the preceding year, in another dispute, in which one man was shot. I am satisfied, as I have frequently stated in former reports, that there is no remedy for these feuds but the Land Court, and the sooner, for the peace and welfare of the district, the better. I invariably find that the strongest opponents of the Land Court are those whose claims, under strict investigation, would be found to amount to little or nothing.

The Native Land Bill of last Session has had the effect of removing in a great measure the objections of many.

The proprietors of the petroleum springs are anxious that the Government should, without delay, proceed to the development of this source of wealth. The very short distance of these springs from a convenient shipping place—only six or seven miles—adds very materially to their value. They are