

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.

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 Ngatipuai 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

willing to lease at present 5,000 acres with the springs, and more if required. Some of the chiefs are also letting, on long leases, blocks of land for sheep-runs. Henare Potae and Ihairaira Te Houkamou set the example, and others are following it. This will be a great means of advancing the prosperity of the district.

The obstacles which have for some time past been thrown in the way of the completion of the bridle-track between Waiapu and Hick's Bay, are at length removed, and the work will be proceeded with at the commencement of spring.

The ferry across the Waiapu River has also been established. The want of this has hitherto rendered the travelling on this part of the coast, particularly during winter, most hazardous, and many lives have been lost.

The health of the Natives has been tolerably good during the last year, but a resident medical man is much required, there being none between Turanga and Opotiki, a distance of 200 miles. This duty I have, for the last eight years, performed, as much as lay in my power; but I have frequently had occasion to feel that the office was attended with too much responsibility for a non-medical man.

The four schools of Waiapu, Tokomaru, Aku Aku, and Kawa Kawa, are completed, and the two former have been opened for some considerable time. The pupils, who are numerous, are progressing very favourably, and in some branches show much aptitude. The teachers are zealous in the discharge of their, in some respects, rather onerous duties.

The chief Ihairaira Te Houkamou, of Hick's Bay, is at present making great preparations for a feast on a grand scale, which is intended to take place during the month of August next.

The Natives, as far as the Kaha, on the Bay of Plenty, are engaged in preparing large quantities of fish, and the people of this district are collecting the requisite supply of birds of various kinds.

The occasion is to be marked by the erection of a new flag-staff with the Queen's flag, and a general declaration of loyalty to her person and Government.

I must, in conclusion, bear my testimony to the very great good which the circulation of the *Waka Maori* newspaper is effecting, as a means of information and instruction. Its arrival is always most eagerly looked for, and it is most diligently perused in every settlement throughout the district. I trust that during the following year there will be a large additional number of subscribers to this really useful paper.

I have, &c.,

J. H. CAMPBELL,
Resident Magistrate, Waiapu.

The Under Secretary, Native Department.

No. 3.

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

SIR,—

Resident Magistrate's Office, Gisborne, 23rd June, 1874.

In sending in the usual annual report on Native matters in this district, I have the honor to state that there is nothing of general or political importance to bring before the notice of the Government. The attention of the great body of the Natives in this district appears to be almost exclusively devoted to local interests, more especially to the land question. Although formerly averse to having their lands dealt with by the Native Land Court, they appear now anxious to avail themselves of it, with the expectation that it will put an end to the unsatisfactory state of affairs that has so long existed. This anxiety for a sitting of the Court is increased and upheld by the number of applications from Europeans to lease lands in this district, thus holding out to the Natives a prospect of a good income from rents. The subdivision of their lands is also very much desired.

The sanitary condition of the Natives has been very good during the last year, and there appears to have been no deficiency of food, or at any rate of the means of obtaining it. Owing to this and the influx of some of the former inhabitants who had been driven out by the disturbed state of the country, I am of opinion that the population has increased during the last three years.

I cannot speak too highly of the manner in which the Natives submit to the operation of the European laws, some of which must appear to them strange, if not incomprehensible. In their disputes amongst themselves they invariably prefer submitting their differences to the Court rather than to their runangas.

As there has not been any large and sudden expenditure of Government money latterly, drunkenness has not been so prevalent; but I fear their sobriety consists in their inability to get drunk for want of the means.

The Native schools have not progressed so satisfactorily in this immediate locality as was at one time hoped, but I believe this is owing to local circumstances, which have to a certain extent been recognized, and can, it is hoped, be remedied.

On the whole, I think the Europeans of the district may congratulate themselves on the amicable relations that exist between them and the Natives, and I believe the Government has no reason to complain of their want of loyalty.

I have, &c.,

W. K. NESBITT,

Resident Magistrate.

The Under Secretary, Native Office, Wellington.

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Report to the United States Department of the Interior

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