

I am glad to say that the important services rendered by the apprehending Maoris have been duly recognized by the Government by payment to them of a special reward, and other considerations in the shape of expenses and food.

The Waikato party, who are not likely to look with favour upon the action taken by their neighbours in this matter, will, no doubt, be impressed with the fact that offenders of the law can be brought at some time or other to justice, and a deterrent effect will be caused thereby to the further commission of crime in the interior.

Concerning Native schools, the Iruharama one is well attended and prosperous, being situated in a central and populous neighbourhood, and has a roll of sixty scholars and a good average attendance, and is under excellent management. The Parikino one, from a variety of causes—scattered population and apathy of resident Natives, &c.—has gone down, and I have called upon the tribes to meet and discuss the question, so as to secure a better attendance of their children; otherwise the school will have to be closed. A special report will be furnished by me on this important subject.

The Wanganui Natives still keep up their support of the *Waka Maori*, and petitioned the Government, along with other tribes, for its continuation. Some eighty Maoris have qualified as electors of the district, and their number will be increased.

During the past year much excitement has been caused amongst the Upper Wanganui River Natives, owing to action taken by gold-prospecting parties from New Plymouth and Wanganui. In August, 1876, a party of both Europeans and Maoris from Waitara extended their researches to the distant interior, to hitherto interdicted country, and were plundered and sent down this river by some of the Hau-Hau chiefs, and strictly forbidden to return by the way they came, through the forest.

Shortly afterwards rumours reached the Natives of a second expedition from Taranaki to the neighbourhood of Taongarakau, where there are extensive coal beds, and they were so incensed thereat that an armed party was despatched to the scene to ascertain whether the rumour was correct or not. Fortunately there was no foundation for the report, and the Natives returned without finding any tracks of a second prospecting party, either for gold or coal. This excitement had scarcely subsided when, in January last, a party went up the river in search of gold from Wanganui, and at ninety miles distant from town were ordered back. The result of this has been the establishment of a blockade on the river, some 100 miles up; and I was turned back myself last March by Te Hai, *alias* Taumatamahoe, at that distance off, when on my way to visit the Tuhua tribes, because, as he said, I had two strange Europeans in my canoe (friends of mine), who, notwithstanding my assurances, he believed were spying out the country to see whether it was auriferous. I did not deserve this treatment, and felt I was the victim of circumstances, entirely caused by the lawless and unwise proceedings of my own countrymen, who, in their thirst after gain, risked collision with the Natives, and have certainly retarded the opening up of the country and thwarted the Government in its efforts in that direction, which were on the eve of success, by negotiation through the principal chiefs and lords of the soil.

This combined action on the part of certain of the inhabitants of New Plymouth and Wanganui was highly impolitic, and has thrown us back some years in our endeavours to conciliate the Native, and get him to consent to search being made for the mineral wealth which no doubt lies hidden in the recesses of this island, as there deposited by the Great Creator for the use and benefit of the human race.

The Maori prophet, Te Whiti, still holds his periodical assemblies at Pariaka, in the Taranaki country; and the Natives continue to attend and have not yet lost faith in his prognostications. The last utterance was to the effect that Waitara was the great “aceldama” (as it was there that the war broke out and the blood of the people was shed—the price of the land); his meaning being that the meeting for finally settling the differences of the two races should be held at Waitara, where Te Teira sold the land that caused the outbreak of war and strife in the country.

I cannot conclude this report without expressing on the part of the Wanganui Natives their deep concern and sorrow at the death of our late Native Minister, Sir Donald McLean. I can truly say that such feeling on the part of the Natives of these districts was intense and wide-spread, and his loss and their bereavement will be felt for many years to come. I have ever felt it a melancholy satisfaction to join with the Natives in their lamentations over the death of him who was indeed “a leader in Israel,” and the “favoured of the people.” May his memory ever be cherished.

The Under Secretary, Native Department,
Wellington.

I have, &c.,
RICHARD W. WOON,
Resident Magistrate.

No. 16.

Mr. R. WARD, R.M., Marton, to the UNDER SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—Resident Magistrate's Office, Marton, 25th May, 1877.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your circular letter No. 4, under date 23rd March, 1877, and, in compliance with your instructions therein contained, have to offer the following report on the state of the Natives in my districts:—