

Hikurangi from Te Kuiti. No doubt the pressure brought to bear on the Waikatos from this source is making them anxious as to the future.

Crops.

The crops throughout the district are more extensive, and have turned out better than they have for several years past. If the pernicious system of large gatherings amongst the Natives could be abolished, most tribes would have plenty for their own wants, and also some for the market. Hone te One has purchased a one-horse-power threshing machine at a cost of £36. It would be a good thing for the Native race if more men of rank like Hone displayed the same amount of industry in agricultural pursuits as he does.

Public Works.

No public works have been executed by the Natives during the past year.

The Ngatihaua.

This tribe, who reside within a radius of forty miles from Cambridge, I have visited periodically during the past year. Their principal kainga is at Maungatautari, which bids fair to be as large a settlement as it formerly was. The Natives there intend to cultivate wheat extensively this season, and have already ploughed several acres of land. They have arranged with their European miller to remain with them, and, as an inducement to him to stop, they have given him the use of a plough and pair of bullocks. The Wharepapa people talk of removing to Korakonui, a place nearer to Kihikihi than their former kainga. The majority of the people who lived at Wharepapa now reside at Hikurangi with Tawhiao. The friendly sections of this tribe reside at Tamahere, Maungakeha, and Matamata. These last are much scattered in small numbers along the banks of the Waitoa River.

I do not perceive any change in these people from last year, excepting that perhaps they are not quite such heavy drinkers as they were a few years since.

The Hon. the Native Minister, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

R. S. BUSH.

No. 11.

Mr. BRABANT to the Hon. the NATIVE MINISTER, Wellington.

SIR,—

Tauranga, 10th June, 1878.

In accordance with your instructions, I have the honor to lay before you my annual report on the state of the Native population, as follows:—

I. Tauranga District.

There is little or no change in the physical condition of the Natives since my last report. This has been a good year as regards food, and they have not had much sickness amongst them; but it must be evident to every one who knows them that they are fast decreasing in numbers. The census just taken shows the Native population of this district to be now 1,086, against 1,245 in 1874, being a decrease of 159 in four years. The very few children they have, in proportion to the adults, is a noticeable fact.

An attempt has been made to get the chiefs to register the births and deaths, which will provide records useful to Government.

Dr. Armitage, the medical officer, has attended the sick and supplied them with medicines. They have also been assisted, as usual, in illness with food, medical comforts, &c.

I cannot say that the moral condition of the Natives has improved during the past year. The convictions at the Resident Magistrate's Court were—For larceny, 5; for drunkenness, 12; for other offences, 3. There were, however, no offences charged against Natives of a more serious nature.

In a good many of the civil cases brought before the Resident Magistrate's Court, Natives have been either plaintiffs or defendants.

The Assessors and other chiefs have rendered me every assistance in any disputes which have arisen between Natives.

The investigation of titles to land, under the Tauranga Lands Act, has been proceeded with by me during the past year, although not so much work has been got through as the year before. This has partly been caused by delays in getting the land surveyed, and partly by the fact that the Natives, having now no great extent of land which is available for disposal to Europeans, are but lukewarm as to selling their titles. One block, however, has been completed, others partially heard; and the large and fiercely-contested Waitaha and Otawa claims have been reheard before Mr. H. T. Clarke, who was appointed a Special Commissioner for the purpose.

The Pirirakau and other so-called Hauhau hapus have given less trouble during the past year, and I hope will soon be as amenable to the law as the other Natives of the district.