

raising. Upwards of fifty Natives from the King-country have been employed in the Waiuku District digging gum during the past year.

Many of the Waiuku Natives have gone to Hikurangi, to attend the annual Native meeting to be held there. They took with them 150 bags of dried sharks.

There are no Native schools in my district, and no Native children attend the public schools. They do not seem to feel any anxiety about the education of their children. Attempts have been made to induce the parents to send their children to schools without success.

The health of the Natives in the Resident Magistrate's Districts of Waiuku and Papakura during the past twelve months has been good. They have not suffered from any epidemic, and a very few deaths have taken place.

The Under-Secretary, Native Department,
Wellington.

I have, &c.,
THOMAS JACKSON,
R.M., Papakura and Waiuku Districts.

No. 8.

Mr. G. T. WILKINSON, Native Agent, Thames, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Native Office, Thames, 28th May, 1881.

In accordance with request contained in your Circular No. 15, of the 23rd ultimo, I have the honor to forward herewith my annual report upon Native affairs in the Thames or Hauraki District.

During the past year several events have occurred likely to considerably exercise the Native mind, and which, on account of their having no fixed occupations or pursuits whereby to employ their time and take up their attention, are likely to influence them, for good or evil, more than is generally thought by their European neighbours. Notably amongst these events was the threatened punishment by death of one of their number, who was accused of causing the death of a chief by witchcraft; and lately, the murder at Te Aroha of one of the Ngatihako-Ngatikoi Natives, named Himiona Haira.

But, before referring to these events *seriatim*, I will report upon their industrial pursuits, education, social condition, and disposition towards Europeans.

Industrial Pursuits : Agriculture.—I am pleased to be able to report that during the past year a marked improvement has been shown in their habits of industry, a greater number of them than previously having paid considerable attention to food-planting. But I think that this change has been brought about more through sheer necessity than the desire to prove the truth of an old Maori proverb which, translated, says, "The fame of a warrior is but fleeting, whereas the fame of one who is industrious in tilling the soil is lasting." During the last eight years land-purchase operations have been carried on to such an extent in this district, and the supply of money from that source has been such a plentiful one, that the Natives of this peninsula, formerly noted for their industry, allowed themselves almost entirely to give up the planting of food, and relied mostly upon the proceeds of land sales to provide themselves with the necessaries of life. These supplies have now, however, to a large extent failed, and it has therefore behoved the Natives to again resort to cultivating the small portions of land still remaining in their possession. It is gratifying, therefore, to be able to report that they are in most cases proving themselves equal to the occasion; and I expect next year will show even greater improvement in the way of agriculture.

Industrial Pursuits : Public Works.—Formerly, the Natives of this district took considerable interest in road-making, &c.; but, as public works have been almost at a standstill during the last twelve months, they have not had much opportunity for engaging in labour of that kind. The formation of the continuation of the county road from Hikutaia to Ohinemuri (over the now famed Komata Block) will enable some of them, if they wish again to engage in this kind of labour, to do so. I have every reason to believe that, after they have got over their surprise at the obstinate Tukukino's obstruction being set at naught by the Government, they will avail themselves of the opportunity of making fair wages at road-making.

Industrial Pursuits : Gum-digging.—The only other occupation at all in favour with the Natives here is kauri-gum-digging, and when prices are high they will desert all other labour for it. The broken, mountainous country in this locality—in fact, all along the peninsula—is still yielding large quantities of gum, and a considerable number of Europeans, as well as Natives, adopt this way of getting a living; and I am glad to be able to say that, notwithstanding their continually being thrown into each other's presence, in the wilds of the forest, no act of violence or aggression has yet occurred to cause either Pakeha or Maori to view one another with distrust or suspicion.

Education.—Under this head I am sorry to say that I cannot report favourably. There are no purely Native schools in this district, but there are Government schools, not only at the Thames and Coromandel, but also at Puriri, Hikutaia, and Ohinemuri, all of which are open to Native children; but in very few cases only are they taken advantage of, and I cannot help thinking that the very fact of education being offered to them without their having to pay for it reduces its value in their eyes. I remember during the early days of the Thames Gold Field, when there was only one school in the district, and that a private one, several Natives availed themselves of it for the education of their children, notwithstanding that the expense (in those days) was considerable. And now, when they can get education for nothing, they (or rather the parents) set very little store upon it.

Social Condition.—The social condition of the Hauraki Natives certainly shows an improvement when compared with the past; drunkenness and the use of intoxicants is not so rampant as it was, which I attribute to two reasons, one (perhaps the greater) is, that since the supply of money formerly obtained through the sale of land has failed, the Natives have, through want of funds, had to give up, *nolens volens*, indulging in drinking to the extent they used to do. The other reason is—and it is plainly visible to a close observer—that the religion known as Te Kooti's, which a great many of them have adopted, prohibits them from too much indulgence in spirituous liquors; in fact, a convert who has real faith in the doctrines he professes is generally found to be a total abstainer. This absence of drunken-