

Maketu-Rotorua Roads. They have also taken a contract for, and nearly completed, what is known as the Otamarakau Bridge Road, some six miles in length, on the Tauranga-Opotiki line.

There are still six Native schools in operation in the Maketu District, viz., at Maketu, Matata, Rotoiti, Ohinemutu, Te Wairoa, and Te Awahou. I have visited each more or less often during the year. They are not so well attended as they should be, but still progress is shown. At every Native school a supply of simple medicines is deposited to be dispensed by the teacher, which arrangement is a great boon to, and appreciated by, the Maori people.

I have visited Maketu several times during the past year, chiefly on matters connected with the Land Purchase Department, the control of which, in this district, has lately been handed over to me; the operations in connection therewith will be seen in the special report of that department.

3. *Opotiki District.*

This district I have been unable, owing to my many and increasing duties, to visit during the past year; it is therefore now only nominally under my charge, and the Government is fortunate in having a Resident Magistrate like Mr. Bush, equal to the management of the large and divided population therein. I hope to be able to visit Opotiki next month to settle some questions in reference to the confiscated lands returned to the Natives.

You will, I hope, Sir, excuse this report reaching you rather later than the date you wished to have it, and also its hurried character. My time having been very fully occupied with the Commissioners' Court is my excuse.

I have, &c.,

HERBERT W. BRABANT,

Native Officer, Bay of Plenty

The Under-Secretary, Native Department,
Wellington.

No. 10.

Mr. R. S. BUSH, R.M., Opotiki, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Resident Magistrate's Office, Opotiki, 30th May, 1881.

I have the honor to furnish the usual annual report on Native matters in this district, for the information of the Hon. the Native Minister.

Condition of the Natives.

There is not much improvement in the condition of the Natives generally since the last year's report; but there are instances of individuals and small parties who have much improved their position during the past year by their industry. I trust others will follow in their footsteps, and that I shall be able to report more favourably every year on their condition.

The Natives in this district received last year upwards of £4,000 for their grain-crops. I believe, when they sell what they have grown this season, they will receive considerably more than that amount.

The Kaha Natives have harvested this season 1,050 sacks of wheat. These people are the only ones in the district who cultivate this cereal to any extent. If the Natives would give up the pernicious habit of living on their growing crop, they would be much better off; as it is, they as a general rule have little or nothing to receive after selling their grain, the proceeds being devoted to pay their debts; consequently they are compelled to draw clothing and food on their next season's crop, a state of affairs which I cannot but think keeps them from being as industrious as they might otherwise be.

The Kaha Natives have purchased a reaping-machine. Machine-labour may induce them to cultivate more extensively than heretofore.

I trust the Opotiki Natives will be induced to cultivate wheat this season.

The Natives throughout the district have not been visited by any epidemic during the past year. Many, however, have died; the chief persons being Apenui, of the Ngatiawa Tribe, resident at Whakata. He was one of that old type of chief of whom very few are now left. He was quickly followed by his youngest daughter. This family appear to have been unusually unfortunate during the last six months, having lost no less than seven of its members. The principal who has died at the eastern end of the district is Paora Matenga, till very lately a fine stalwart young man. He died a few days ago, apparently from consumption. He will be much missed, as he was a chief of considerable influence on this coast.

Disposition.

There is no change in the disposition of the tribes resident in this district; they still maintain the character they have had for some years for good behaviour, and respect for our laws. During the past twelve months there has been very little crime amongst the Natives in this district. No case of a serious nature has occurred. The Urewera even seem more inclined to submit their differences to be dealt with by our Courts. I have, during the past three or four months, adjudicated on several cases brought into Court by members of this tribe. I find these people more anxious to act in accordance with our laws than they were; they are frequent visitors to consult with me as to what they should do with respect to their intertribal quarrels in the interior. I am happy to say, after fully discussing the matter, they invariably acted as directed.

There are a good many Natives in this district who still adhere to Te Kooti's form of religion and prayers. I am inclined to think the cause of this is chiefly the power which Te Kooti is said to possess in curing the sick, many of whom are taken all the way to Te Kooti for him to cure. I need not say that the cures are very few; but still the faith in his curative powers is relied on, probably because he is able to give what appears to the relatives of the deceased a feasible excuse for his failure—which is, generally, *makutu*, or witchcraft; giving this as the cause of death, he is, of course, bound to point to some person as the sorcerer. During the past year several cases have arisen in which Natives residing here have been accused of exercising this art, after relatives of those deceased had interviewed Te Kooti. One unfortunate Native was accused of killing no less than seventeen of his relatives by *makutu*. Te Waru also is accused of killing Apanui's daughter, because solicited to do so by a woman