

The Natives of the Thames District, with the exception, perhaps, of the Ngatihako, were ever a good specimen of law-abiding Maoris, and this year has shown no exception to that rule.

The Native school that was last year started at Kirikiri is well attended, and the parents of the children continue to look with favour upon it.

The Natives of this district have had a fair immunity from sickness during the year, no disease of an alarming nature having attacked them; the deaths have been confined principally to young children and adults of no particular rank. There has, however, been one notable exception, and that is the case of old Te Hira te Tuiri, who died at Upper Piako in November last. He will be remembered as the chief who, on account of his great rank and position he held amongst his people, was able, in 1868-69, to keep the whole Ohinemuri District closed against gold-mining, in spite of the wishes of a large number of both Europeans and Natives, coupled with the strenuous efforts of Mr. James Mackay, who was then Government Agent for the Thames District; and it was not until seven years later—during which time the old man had manfully held his ground against overwhelming odds—that he finally gave in to the late Sir Donald McLean, in February, 1875, and allowed the country to be opened for gold-mining purposes. He was a most consistent chief of the old school, and considered more the benefit of the Maoris as a race than that of individuals, and his impression always was that the two races were so differently constituted, and their manners and customs were of such a different nature, that what was beneficial to one was detrimental to the other; hence his idea of the necessity of keeping them as far apart as possible. And he was not alone in that idea; the majority of old Natives who have had experience in the matter, and are entitled to speak (and not a few Europeans also), are of the same way of thinking. When Te Hira found that he was not able any longer to resist the wishes of his people, he reluctantly gave in; but, in order that he might not take any further part in what he considered would end disastrously to his people, he left Ohinemuri, where he was then living, and removed to Upper Piako. His death was rather sudden, as he had not previously been ailing. When Te Hira removed from Ohinemuri the mantle of opposition fell upon another now well-known old chief, named Tukukino, and a very energetic old obstructionist he turned out to be, as Ministers, Government Native Agents, and County Councillors can testify. But even he has become amenable to reason. The road between Paeroa and Hikutaia, which he so long kept closed, has been opened for some time for traffic, and there is now no further trouble in connection with it. The difficulty that previously existed regarding his claim to nearly the whole of the Komata North Block, and of which he was only one out of eight grantees, has been satisfactorily settled by the Hon. Mr. Bryce giving him double the area that he would be entitled to were an equal division made amongst the grantees, and, in addition, giving him a *tapu* reserve of fifty acres at the mouth of the Komata Stream.

A sitting of the Native Land Court was held at Shortland in September last, and a Court is now sitting at Paeroa, where there are a considerable number of claims to be disposed of.

Nothing has been done since my last report in connection with the survey of the Piako Block, on the purchase of which the Government have already spent some £21,000. The winter weather having now set in, it will be impossible to do anything further in the matter until next spring.

There have been no public works within the Thames District during the past year.

A Native Committee under "The Native Committees Act, 1883," was elected in March last, and they are about to be called together for their first meeting. From the interest the Thames Natives take in the matter, I have every reason to believe that they will make the working of the Act a success.

I have, &c.,

G. T. WILKINSON,

Government Native Agent, Thames, Auckland, and Waikato.

The Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

No. 6.

H. W. BRABANT, Esq., R.M., TAURANGA, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Tauranga, Bay of Plenty, 14th May, 1884.

In compliance with your Circular No. 3, dated the 9th ultimo, I have the honour to submit the following as my annual report on Native affairs in the Tauranga and Maketu-Rotorua Districts for the year ended the 31st March last.

I.—*Tauranga District.*

During the past year there has been little sickness amongst the Maori population: they have been assisted as usual with medical attendance and medicines on application. In March, Enoka te Whanake, one of the principal chiefs of the Ngaiterangi, died. He had been of late years an Assessor, and a staunch supporter of all Government measures. He was greatly respected by the Europeans, and his loss will be much felt by his tribe. This year, owing to the exceptional season, the Native crops are very light, and I fear considerable distress will be felt. A number of the Ngaiterangi are leaving for the gum fields to earn the means of support during the coming winter. I notice year by year that the Natives rely less on their cultivations for support, and more on money earned by working for wages for farmers, on gum-fields, roads, &c.