

from there to Wairoa. The Mohaka Natives entrenched themselves in a pa, and threatened to stop his passage through their settlement; but, on it being represented to them that he was merely passing along the public road, they shut themselves up in their pa, and refused to hold any communication whatever with him. He then proceeded to Wairoa, where he was visited by all his old followers and some of the loyal Natives, others expressing their indignation at his impudence in visiting the scenes of his atrocities and parading himself about. I am of opinion that these visits should be discouraged, as they only tend to make the friendly Natives feel more keenly the losses they suffered at his hands many years ago.

Native Lands.—I am still of opinion that the disposal of Native lands should be through the Waste Lands Boards of the colony, and that there should be one or two Natives appointed to each Board, or elected by the Natives of the land district. The charges for survey, commission, and stamp fees should be reduced to the lowest possible scale, in order to make the system popular amongst the Natives, thus promoting settlement of the country.

I have, &c.,

GEORGE A. PREECE,

Resident Magistrate.

The Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

No. 11.

Mr. E. S. MAUNSELL, Native Agent, Greytown, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Greytown North, Wairarapa, 25th April, 1886.

In compliance with the instructions contained in your letter of the 24th March last I have the honour to report on the state of the Maoris in this district.

The result of the census recently taken shows a small increase, chiefly males. Several of the principal men have died during the past year; among these, Manihera Rangitakaiwaho, a prominent chief in the past.

The social state of the Maoris is improving, and good dwellings are taking the place of the Maori whare. At the principal villages, Te Oreore, near Masterton, and Papawai, near Greytown North, very good houses have been built—at Papawai especially—timber being purchased from sawmillers with the proceeds of the sale of totara and other timber, of which large quantities abound. The houses have been erected by themselves in a very creditable manner. A carved house is now in course of construction by a party of the Ngatiporou from near Gisborne. The carvings have occupied about six years in execution, and are of a most elaborate kind. The building will, it is believed, eclipse any similar one in the colony. Much money has been wasted over this house.

It cannot be said that the Natives are less indolent. They look to rents and sale of whatever can conveniently be disposed of to supply temporary wants: cultivation and honest occupation is neglected. Their improvident habits often result in monetary difficulties, and compel them to raise money on crops and timber to satisfy the claims of creditors. What they will do when they have nothing to sell it is difficult to conjecture, unless they part with land. This, at present, they are most reluctant to do. However, in most cases their lands are “restricted from sale;” but where they are free to sell they prefer to go to gaol when pressed by creditors rather than do so, yet at the last moment escape imprisonment by taking extraordinary means to obtain the money.

A good schoolhouse has been built by the Education Department at Papawai, and is attended by European as well as Maori children. It is proposed to convert one of the buildings there into a house for the reception of Maori children from other parts of the district. There is also a school at Te Oreore. No schoolhouse has been built there, owing to the title to the land offered for a site being imperfect.

The Maori Volunteer rifle corps which has been enrolled at Papawai attends regular drill. It is to be hoped that this movement will not die out among the Maoris, for training of a military kind must greatly improve them. Little accustomed to be ruled, any discipline to which they must conform would train them to appreciate good government and would have a civilizing effect.

Politics engage the attention of the Maori only so far as he believes himself concerned.

“The Maori Committees Act, 1883,” has been brought into operation, and the Committee elected; but no chairman has been appointed owing to the absence of two leading men who are engaged as Assessors under the Native Land Court. The members have awaited their return from Gisborne before proceeding to appoint a chairman.

The recent visit of the Native Minister, the Hon. Mr. Ballance, to the district has been much appreciated. At a meeting held at Papawai, and attended by the representative Maoris of the district, Mr. Ballance was most cordially received. He explained the provisions of the Native Lands Administration Bill, as he had done at Hawke’s Bay; and the Natives affirmed the approval given at Waipatu, Hawke’s Bay, to the principle of this Bill. At the Minister’s suggestion it was agreed to appoint a committee of Natives to treat with the Government with a view to place the questions in dispute in regard to the Wairarapa Lakes on a satisfactory basis.