

Crown getting 45,000 acres out of the block in return for some £17,000 of advances. As I am under the impression that you will furnish a special report on this matter, I need not refer to it at any greater length here.

The Native owners of the Thames, Coromandel, and Te Aroha goldfields have for some time past been complaining of the serious falling-off of the revenue from their lands which are at present taken up for gold-mining purposes. I have, at your request, reported fully upon the matter, and have endeavoured to show that the diminution of revenue now derivable from those lands is not so much brought about because a lesser area of land is taken up than formerly, but because the Mining Act of 1886 (and regulations) has, apparently under the assumption that all goldfields lands are the property of the Crown, so altered the area that can now be taken up for mining purposes, and so reduced the leasing rents, &c., that it is only in extremely exceptional cases that it is now possible for the land to yield as much revenue to its owners as it previously has done. I have also pointed out in my report that the Mining Act of 1886 makes it legal for any one to mine on Native land within the goldfield without being the possessor of a miner's right, which provision, it seems to me, is distinctly at variance with the agreement entered into by the Government with the Natives when the goldfield was opened in 1867—viz., that every person mining for gold was to be the possessor of a miner's right, for which he was to pay £1. The Native owners of the goldfield also complain that, notwithstanding the serious reduction in the goldfields revenue, they have to pay 5 per cent. out of what they receive towards paying for the allocation of same, and for clerical services.

The four Native schools in my districts are in a fairly flourishing condition. I should have been able to have another Native school established in this district—viz., at Otoraunga, where there are a large number of Native and half-caste children—but the Education Department would not give a promise that, if the Natives gave the necessary land for a school-site, and found the required number of children, it would build a school for them. Everything was arranged, whilst a large block was being put through the Native Land Court, to have a portion (two acres) cut off for a school-site, and to have it awarded to two or three owners only in order to facilitate the transfer to Government; but when the Natives found that there was no certainty that the school would be built, although the required site might be provided and the necessary forms complied with, they objected to proceed any further in the matter, and the chance to establish a Native school there was lost for the present.

I am glad to be able to report that the record of crime and misdemeanour amongst the Natives of my districts during the past year has been very small.

I have, &c.,

GEO. T. WILKINSON,
Government Native Agent and Land-purchase Officer,
Waikato, Thames, and Auckland.

The Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

No. 5.

Mr. R. S. BUSH, Resident Magistrate, Tauranga, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Resident Magistrate's Office, Tauranga, 3rd June, 1889.

In reply to your circular letter of the 23rd ultimo I have the honour to furnish the following report on the Natives in the districts under my charge:—

TAURANGA.

The health of the Natives during the past year has, upon the whole, been very good—the rate of mortality not excessive. Most of those who have died have been old people. No epidemic disease has visited them. They appear to be comfortably clothed, with a plentiful supply of provisions. This season they appear to have grown a considerable quantity of wheat, which yielded a very fair amount of grain to the acre—more, really, than was anticipated at the time of sowing. This has given them heart to put down a greater extent of land in this cereal this winter. The wheat that was sold realised from 3s. to 3s. 3d. per bushel, while the average yield per acre was thirty bushels in many localities about Tauranga. The kumara-crop is very good this year, and potatoes fairly good. Unfortunately the Wairoa Native Mill is not working, owing to some mishap to some part of the machinery. This is a drawback, as it necessitates the carting of the wheat to Te Puke, a distance of nearly twenty miles. This, however, will, I presume, only be a temporary inconvenience. A great many Natives from this and adjoining districts are absent at Mercury Bay gum-diggings. No maize of any consequence is grown here. When grown it does not appear to yield or grow as it does at the eastern portion of the Bay. It, however, grows very well at Te Puke. The Natives there grow patches of it. The Te Puke Natives also intend trying wheat-growing this season.

Since the Papamoa frauds no cases of any serious offences in which Natives have been concerned have been before the Court. The conduct of the Natives has been remarkably good: only a very few have been dealt with by the Court for minor offences.

The four Native schools have been in full work during the past year. That at Te Matai, near Te Puke, has had the largest attendance. The school-teacher here has been obliged to refuse to admit scholars for want of room. The attendance averages about fifty. The total number of pupils is 185—viz., 105 males and 80 females.

Generally the Natives in and about Tauranga appear healthy, well clothed, and comfortable, and are fairly sober. They are, I think, strictly loyal, although some of them are adherents of Tawhiao, the so-called Maori King; but, as he is now only a man of very small importance, I presume the adherence of these people is simply a matter of principle, with no ulterior object in view, as