

they are most law-abiding. The Pirirakau, at Te Puna, are all Kingites. These people never appear to have made any open surrender, or to have acquiesced in the land-confiscation. They have continued to occupy land at Te Puna belonging to the Government, which lately has been cut up into fifty-acre sections with a view to its being sold. Although these people have not openly acquiesced in the confiscation of their lands, yet they have made up their minds that the land is gone, and will be sold. In consequence of this, I understand, they meditate removing from that locality if they cannot succeed in purchasing some of the sections advertised. Amongst these Pirirakau are some persons who are members of the Ngatirangiwehe, a section of Arawa, who reside at Te Awahou, near Rotorua. These persons were in rebellion, and after the cessation of hostilities, instead of returning to their own tribe, remained with the Pirirakau.

MAKETU.

I have visited Maketu periodically to hold the Resident Magistrate's and Police Courts there. No serious offences have been committed: debt cases have been the principal business before the Court. No charge of drunkenness was dealt with. Here, as at Tauranga, the Natives appear to have improved in their general conduct; but whether this state of things is to be attributed to their own inclinations or to a want of funds remains to be seen. I trust, however, it may prove to emanate from themselves.

These Natives never appear to have been very great cultivators of the soil, and I cannot say I see much improvement on this score. They seem to lead a hand-to-mouth kind of existence, never having more crops than they can consume themselves. Such a thing as sending produce to market seems to be an unheard-of thing here.

The Ngatipikiao, under Te Pokiha Taranui, have a religion of their own in opposition to Te Kooti's. It is somewhat similar to his, but yet quite different in form. It is stated that Himiora te Orinui, the head prophet of this faith, is to meet Te Kooti and have a discussion with him, after which, it is said, they are to unite. At Maketu there are four different sects: a large majority, however, belong to what is termed there "Pokiha's Karakia" (Fox's Church).

During the past year the Natives here have been employed on a long cutting leading from Maketu to the Waihi River ferry, a work much required, but which was obstinately resisted by these people for some years.

The Maketu Natives for some time have not taken as much interest in their school as they usually do, but I am glad to be able to report an improvement for the better during the last few months, which I trust will continue. The Maketu Natives are very migratory, at times being at Rotoiti and Rotorua.

The Natives at Matata seem to be living in their usual quiet way, the majority growing very little more than it takes to feed them. I do not know what some of these people would do for food if it were not for the immense quantities of eels that are caught in the swamps.

The people here are mostly Roman Catholics and Te Kooti-ites. The Tawera, however, belong to the Church of England. These Natives, as a rule, are a well-conducted and law-abiding people, seldom giving any trouble. They have always taken great interest in their school, which for years past has maintained an average attendance of over fifty. The present number on the roll is forty-five males and thirty-one females.

Three Natives—young men from this settlement—a short time ago went pig-hunting in the bush. During their hunt they came across a tree which contained a hive of bees and honey, some of which they ate. The honey, it is alleged, was poisonous, and the three young men became exceedingly ill, suffering very much from convulsions. They appear to have undressed themselves and rushed into the cold stream near at hand, in which two of them were found dead, a day or two after, by the party which went to search for them. The third youth managed to find his way back to Matata in a dreadful state—a state which the Natives describe as being mad. Nothing could be gathered from him as to his companions. Had it not been for the older men recognising the symptoms as honey-poisoning, no search would have been made for his companions for a day or two. The Natives allege that honey gathered at certain seasons of the year is poisonous. I, however, do not think any honey is poisonous: the fact is, Natives eat so voraciously, and so much of it at the one time, that I am not surprised at their being ill from it. It is not only the honey that is eaten, but the wax, the contents of the cells, and bees also.

There was a similar case near Opotiki, where three Native schoolboys went out honey-hunting, leaving home without anything to eat. When they found the honey they ate ravenously of it, eating everything as they got it out of the tree. One of these was found dead in a creek; the other two recovered, emetics having been administered by some European neighbours. The three persons who lost their lives appear all to have been found in the water, which points to the fact of their having been drowned—probably while in a fit of convulsions. In the Matata case some of the search-party ate of some honey, when they likewise were taken with convulsions, from which they recovered after being placed in the creek. Having others to watch them, they escaped being drowned. Unfortunately, no inquests were held in the Matata cases or on that near Opotiki. Neither of the cases was reported to me: had they been, I doubt very much if the relatives would have sanctioned a *post-mortem*, without which nothing of importance could have been discovered. From what I can learn, I am satisfied that these persons were drowned while in the water through having convulsive fits. Strange to say, there have been several cases this autumn of what is supposed to be honey-poisoning. Five members of one family—Europeans—at Te Puke nearly lost their lives from this cause. These were very ill indeed. In this case the honey eaten was box-honey, but I believe the children partook of the wax as well. An adult native at Whakatane was nearly dead from the same cause.

The Natives have a theory that new honey at certain seasons of the year is dangerous—persons partaking of it are poisoned; but the same honey the following year is perfectly harmless. The reason given for this is the gathering of the material from which the honey, &c., is manufac-