

sown with wheat and oats this year than usual, besides large quantities of potatoes and Indian corn. The kumara is likewise largely grown, and the Maori breadfruit, together with pumpkins and melons. Of fruit there are large quantities—namely, peaches, apples, figs, pears, quinces, grapes, and Cape gooseberries, for which they find a ready and improving market in the Town of Wanganui.

With respect to the growth of hops at the river settlements, the Native growers have been much discouraged, owing to their having failed to obtain a profitable market for those raised by them in the Town of Wanganui, owing to the crops having been culled too soon, and for the want of a kiln to dry them with; the brewers here declining to purchase for a paying price anything but a dried hop. In one case, the Maori grower sun-dried his hops, which he pulled too late, and ruined them; another pulled his three weeks too soon, and another, not knowing the proper time for gathering in his crop, left them to dry and decay away on the stems, without gathering them at all.

Notwithstanding these disappointments, the Natives do not intend giving up their culture, but will seek for information and assistance from their European neighbours, one of whom, a Mr. Cathro, grew a nice little crop off an acre and three-quarters, at the foot of St. John's Wood Hill, for which, I believe, he got a paying price. I hope to get some experienced white man to start a hop garden on the river, and thereby afford the Natives an opportunity of acquiring the information necessary to the successful cultivation of this profitable branch of industry.

Touching the matter of sericulture, the Natives have begun to plant out and increase the number of mulberry trees supplied to them; and possibly, next summer, an attempt may be made to introduce the silk-worm—respecting the manipulation and feeding of which some information will have to be given. The Rev. B. K. Taylor, of Putiki, on one of his visits to the Natives with me, exhibited a nice specimen of silk, in cocoon and unwound, raised at his place, and explained the whole process to the Natives, much to their delight and astonishment.

The annual ploughing match, in which both Europeans and Natives took part, came off at Aramoho, in August last. Owing to the unpropitious state of the weather, only nine European competitors appeared; and there were seven or eight Maori teams on the ground. Their average ploughing was better than the work of the colonials, with one exception. In a numerical sense, the match was a failure; but the ploughing was of the highest order. Thirty pounds was given by the Native Minister towards the Maori prizes, of which Wiremu Tauri, of Putiki, took the highest, £6; and Tete, of Aramoho, the next, £3. In the evening a dinner was held, at which the Natives appeared in force, and spoke eloquently. One in particular, Toitoi, said—"They (the Maoris) highly approved of ploughing matches, and felt grateful to the Europeans for encouraging same, as a means of establishing good feeling between the races. That they were an indication of the friendly feelings subsisting between Europeans and Natives, and were deserving of popularity. That their thanks were due to the Government for its support in giving prizes, which was a proof of the interest it took, not only in their welfare, but that of the white people. That it was far more profitable to engage in peaceful industries, cultivating the soil, &c., than engaging in war and strife; and he hoped henceforth that the gun and the spear would be forsaken, and their places supplied by the plough and the harrow. He hoped the matches would be continued; and that great praise was due to Mr. Walker, for his aid and assistance in getting them up, and for the instruction he had given them. That he and Tete had attended a like meeting last year at Rangitikei, and had borne off prizes, and that they would always be ready to compete at any matches of the kind in future."

Next season the ploughing match will be held on the grounds of W. H. Watt, Esq., at Westmere, and it is anticipated that there will be a much larger muster of competitors, both European and Maori, than at last year's match. There can be no question about the benefits accruing from matches of this kind, and they ought to be well supported by the public.

With regard to public works undertaken by the Natives, I am not aware of any being prosecuted in my district during the past year.

The road or bridle track made some time ago under the auspices of the Government from Ranana and Iruharama to the Murimotu plains have begun to be used by both Natives and Europeans, and quantities of goods have found their way by pack saddle across to the plains, where stores are about being started prior to the settlement of that vast and important part of the country, which will no doubt ere long, as this island advances and the interior becomes opened up, become the home of a large European population.

During the past year a couple of the mill houses, one at Karatia and the other at Koriniti, have been put up at the expense of the Natives. The former was built by carpenters engaged in town, and the latter by the Natives themselves. The iron machinery for the Koriniti mill is now on the way out from Glasgow, and the water-wheel and other necessary ironwork for Karatia mill will be made in Wanganui. The totara timber for Pipiriki mill house is almost all cut, and the machinery is stored, awaiting the completion of the new building, which, being all of totara, will last for a length of time. A quantity of wheat is kept in reserve, to be ground at the mills, which when completed, there will be no lack of good flour for home consumption and sale at Wanganui. In another year I hope to see all these mills in full working order, and I trust they will prove of value, and in every way beneficial to their enterprising owners, who, in the face of many difficulties, are pushing them forward to ultimate completion.

The *Waka Maori* continues to be well supported, and after making allowance for those struck off from death and other causes, I have still one hundred and fifty names on my list of subscribers. The paper is well conducted and ably edited, and has been the means of disseminating much useful information amongst the Maoris. I find that the Henry Matua party are about starting a newspaper of their own, to be free from all Government or Pakeha control, and subscriptions to the amount of £100 have been forwarded by the Ngatiapa and other Natives; and in consequence some of my Ngatiapa subscribers to the *Waka* have intimated their intention of giving up the *Waka* and going in for Henry Koura's paper, which, if it meets with no better support than the *Wananga*, will soon come to naught. It shows, however, the independent spirit of the Maoris when they embark in so expensive an undertaking as the launching of a newspaper, entirely under their own influence and control, and for