

No. 12.

Dr. ORMOND, R.M., Wairoa, to the UNDER SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Resident Magistrate's Office, Wairoa, 11th May, 1877.

I have the honor to report that no event of any importance has occurred in this district amongst the Natives during the past twelve months. The heavy floods in January and February last destroyed a large quantity of food; the early crop of potatoes in many places rotted after being dug, and the seed potatoes for the late crop were actually washed out of the ground. At Nuhaka the greater part of the cultivations were covered with from six to eight feet of silt, which, although it will make good soil for the coming season, has caused a great amount of hardship. Had it not been for the European storekeepers throughout the district, tempted by the prospect of land sales to the Government, supplying the Natives with flour, sugar, and other necessaries on credit, an appeal would have had to be made to the Government for assistance. The credit system having been commenced, the Natives were not slow to avail themselves of it, and I have no hesitation in saying that, as a rule, every Native in the district is about £10 in debt, and in some individual instances from £200 to £500. The inland Natives about Te Rcinga appear to have taken advantage of their local situation, and patronized the Poverty Bay storekeepers as well, running up such enormous accounts that it seems difficult to see how they are to pay them, £2,000 being put down as one chief's liabilities alone.

The crimes of drunkenness, prostitution, and larceny are on the decrease, but a mania for gambling appears to be prevalent, every settlement having its regular votaries to the games of *mihini* (loo) or *hipi* (brag). The amounts won and lost are not large, but much time is wasted foolishly. A strong belief in witchcraft still exists, and in two instances chiefs have visited the noted Te Kooti, in the Waikato, with a view of getting the power of certain supposed wizards of this district neutralized by some charm Te Kooti is thought to possess.

The health of the Natives has been good; there has been an absence of epidemics, and the death rate is much lower than last year. I issue medicines to the Natives as required, principally for low fever, colds, asthma, and children's diseases. I have visited nearly all the settlements in the district, for the purpose of collecting the arms issued by the Government some years back. Up to date I have recovered 211 stand of arms, some of them in a fair state of preservation.

There has been a slight tribal land dispute at Nuhaka, and I have had some little difficulty in persuading these hapus to hand in their arms. A surveyor was warned off the disputed land; but, from conversations I have had with the Natives since, I am inclined to think the survey will be allowed to proceed quietly. Two of my Assessors, Hamana and Toha, have rendered me much assistance in this matter.

There is only one Native school at present in the district; but, owing to its position and the dilapidated state of the building, it is not so well attended as I would wish. Another school has been applied for by the Urewera at Onepoto. The importance of this application from a wild and formerly turbulent tribe like the Urewera can hardly be over-estimated. Children from Ruatahuna and other far-off settlements would attend; and I am in great hopes the school will be established.

A large meeting was held at the Whakaki on the 24th April, for the purpose of opening a large wooden church, built entirely at the expense of the Whakaki Natives. A feast was prepared, and everything went off with *éclat*. There could not have been less than 1,000 Natives present. Numbers of Europeans were there by invitation. The usual amount of speechifying took place, all of a most pacific tendency.

Great grief has been expressed throughout the district, both by Europeans and Natives, at the death of the late Native Minister: he was looked up to, respected, and beloved by all.

In conclusion, I would wish to state that the utmost unanimity prevails between both races throughout the district.

The Under Secretary, Native Department,
Wellington.

I have, &c.,

FREDK. F. ORMOND,
Resident Magistrate.

No. 13.

Mr. S. LOCKE, R.M., to the UNDER SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Napier, 23rd May, 1877.

I have the honor to forward the following report on the state of the Natives in this district. I am happy to be able to state that during the past year matters in relation to the Natives have gone on generally in a quiet and orderly manner, the only exception being the Ngatahira or Omarunui dispute, in which case—although no overt action has occurred—the Natives are still in occupation of the 160 acres of land, a portion of the Omarunui No. 1 Block of 3,573 acres, on the banks of the Tutaekuri. This land, the Natives declared, was never intended to be included in the deed of sale to Mr. Sutton; while the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal decided that by law it was included. Mr. Sutton's title is under the Transfer Act. Law-suits and disputes in relation to lands formerly dealt with under the various Native Land Acts are still going on, some of which have been adjusted; but to this subject I will not further refer than to renew my former remarks on the importance of the law, if possible, being made more