

Bull's, at which some of the Ngatikahoro and Ngatiparewahawaha Natives live. Their cultivations are not so extensive as they might be, considering the number of people. Last season they produced some oats and wheat, and are now preparing for the next season's crops; but they do not cultivate as much as they should, for their land is without exception the finest in the district. At Matahiwi they have built a very neat little church, which gives the settlement quite a civilized appearance, but, unfortunately, with few exceptions, these Natives are not so temperate as they might be. They have made several attempts to band themselves together as Good Templars, and have kept their pledges until visited by some friends, when they consider it necessary to spend large sums of money in drink of all kinds, and consequently they are not at all prosperous. I must confess to a feeling of sympathy with and a deep interest in these people. They are continually making efforts to shake off one of their worst enemies—strong drink.

Ohinepuhiawe is a settlement opposite the township of Bull's. The Natives here have a few cultivations, but of small extent, and seem to have lost their former energy, when great numbers were regularly employed in cultivating their land, and used to produce large quantities of wheat, maize, and potatoes. They now spend the greater portion of the money they derive from rents, &c., in drink, and are therefore not well off. If the Natives mentioned in the last two settlements were to become temperate in their drinking, or abstain altogether, I have no doubt that in a short time they would be comfortably well off, as their young men are equal to any Europeans as workmen, and their land is of the very best quality.

At Parewanui the Ngatiapa tribe have had some good crops of wheat and oats; they have produced about 1,000 bushels of wheat, and talk of cropping largely the ensuing year. The fact that they can get their crops cut and threshed by machinery is to them a very great inducement for extending their farming operations. I note that Utiku Marumaru and his party purchased an imported short-horn bull lately for £100, and several well-bred rams at a high price. They are determined to improve their stock. The wool grown by the Natives on the Parawanui Reserve this year realised £700, which is at the rate of nearly 10s. per acre. The tribe had on this reserve in all about 150 acres in crops of different kinds. I am glad to be able to say that these people are industrious and well conducted, and many of them well off. They possess some of the finest draught and riding horses in the district. They are decidedly progressing.

As to the Natives at Manawatu and Otaki, I regret to say I am unable to report much that would indicate progress. I notice that near Foxton Ihakara Tukumaru and his people have erected a very neat little church, of which they are justly proud. The Natives in the districts now under consideration have been in an unsettled state for some years, owing to land difficulties and disputes. I think I may say these are lessening, and hope to be able to report more favourably next year. Going among them freely, I find many of the causes of their disputes and much dissatisfaction to arise from the fact that their land is generally granted to a number of persons who hold it in common. Many of these persons, I find, are disposed and have attempted to enclose and cultivate their land, but the others, as soon as an attempt is made to erect a fence, destroy it, or wait until the crop is ready for use, when they assert themselves as owners and take it away. The Natives say they wish their claims to be individualized; that they have no heart to work for the benefit of others; they cannot run sheep on the land but others claim all the profit; and so many sink down to a hard-drinking, card-playing, dissolute lot of people.

There is a sad falling-off in the health of the Natives generally at and near Otaki, consumption being still very common, and low fever is very prevalent amongst the Maoris living in the neighbourhood of the Horowhenua Lake.

I am pleased to be able to note the fact that Hoani Meihana and others of the Rangitane tribe, living at and near Palmerston, are the owners of the Hokowhitu saw-mill, which I believe is equal to any in the Manawatu County.

I cannot conclude my report without noting the effect of a meeting held at Otaki lately, by the Hon. the Native Minister, on the land question. I am informed the Hon. Dr. Pollen pretty plainly intimated that no more advances would be made on land that had not first passed through the Native Land Court, and that he positively refused to pay a large sum of money which the Maoris concluded he had come to hand over for a certain block of land, the ownership of which is in dispute. This firmness was new to them, and, together with the disappointment of not getting the expected money, caused great discontent at first, but it quickly disappeared, and the Maoris now freely admit that this new policy is right, and if followed will have a very beneficial effect.

In furnishing this report, I have to acknowledge much interesting and valuable information received from the Rev. A. Honore, Messrs. McDonald, Hadfield, Cook, Fraser, and Stevens.

I have, &c.,

The Under Secretary, Native Department,
Wellington.

ROBERT WARD,
Resident Magistrate.

No. 17.

Mr. F. E. HAMLIN, R.M., Maketu, to the UNDER SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Resident Magistrate's Office, Maketu, 31st May, 1877.

In forwarding the following report of the district lately under my charge for the year