

1876-77, I have the honor to remark that, with one exception, I consider the aspect of Native affairs to be satisfactory.

1st. The exception I allude to is an idea strongly impressed upon the minds of numbers of the Ngatipikiao tribe residing at Maketu, that the deaths of two individuals of their number have been caused by witchcraft; and three names are mentioned, two of whom belong to Ngatipikiao and one to Ngatimoko, as having been the cause of their deaths. They have held several meetings on the subject, and have even talked about putting the accused individuals to death, and have asked Ngatiwhakaue to join them. The latter tribe, however, declined, and furthermore stated that they should take the suspected parties under their special protection. From conversation I have recently held with one of the Ngatipikiao chiefs, I am inclined to believe that nothing more than absurd threats and intimidations will be the result.

Only one land dispute has taken place amongst the Arawas during the late year, and that occurred at Ohinemutu, the disputants being Taiapo te Waiatua and his so-called younger brother, Te Retiu Whititera, and Wi Maihi te Rangikaheke, of Ngatikeuru. This at one time threatened to be a very serious affair, both parties being under arms; but, with the assistance of Mr. Commissioner Brabant and some Native Assessors, matters were temporarily arranged, and it was ultimately decided that it should be referred to the Native Land Court for adjudication.

As regards the morality of the district, I have nothing to add to my report of last year. Crimes are of rare occurrence, and it is a very unusual thing to see a drunken Maori in Maketu. This may perhaps arise from the fact that the residents here have not the same means of indulging in that debasing habit as their brethren inland, who, from the constant influx of tourists, are enabled to provide themselves with liquor, consequently intoxication and its concomitant evils are much more frequent amongst them. No illness of an epidemic character has attacked this district during the last twelve months, and the mortality has been of the usual average. The only people of note who have departed this life are Te Puehu Taihorangi, of the Ngatipikiao tribe; Te Poari, of Ngatimoko; and Repora, wife of Wi Maihi te Rangikaheke.

The district has still felt the want of a duly-qualified medical practitioner, but it has been much beholden to the assiduous attentions of Mr. Pinker, Native schoolmaster, who has been very successful in treating the Natives homœopathically. He is always ready and willing, when called upon, to do his utmost in aid of suffering humanity.

The several Native schools in this district are progressing favourably. That at Te Wairoa has greatly improved since the appointment of Mr. and Mrs. Hassard, both of whom appear to be excellent school teachers, and the attendance roll shows an average of fifty, with seventy names on the books. I hear very good accounts of both Major Wood's school at Te Rotoiti, and Mr. Creeke's at Matata; and Mr. Pinker's, at Maketu, shows signs of the advancement made by the pupils. A school is much needed at Ohinemutu.

In agriculture: The Natives of Maketu planted a small crop of wheat and oats, which turned out very well; they were also very successful with their potatoes and kumaras, especially the latter, the yield being very great. They have introduced from the North a new species of kumara called "waina," which is wonderfully prolific. The maize crop was to a great extent a failure: it looked and bore well, but, having been planted late, it did not ripen before the wet weather set in. Some of the Ngatiwhakaue and Waitaha, who had large potato plantations on the banks of the Waiari, a tributary of the Kaituna, were great sufferers from a flood that occurred in February last, and, had it not been for the aid afforded them by the Government and European and Native friends, they would have been driven to a state of starvation. In the Lake districts they have threshed about 3,000 bushels of oats of a very good quality, and they have also a plentiful supply of potatoes.

The road between Maketu and Ohinemutu is in a very bad state of repair, in some places almost overgrown with fern and scrub, and, in others, large fissures made by heavy rains make it very dangerous travelling, especially after dark.

A Native woman recently died at Ohinemutu, after having given birth to twins—it is asserted through the ill-usage of her husband, a Native of the Tuhourangi tribe. No reliable evidence however, of the facts of his having ill-treated her could be procured, and, as I anticipated that the case would fall through, I deemed it advisable to take no action in the matter.

During a heavy squall that occurred in the early part of this month, a large willow-tree was blown down, falling on the top of the Courthouse, completely smashing it in, leaving only the office standing; but a heavy gale from the north-east, setting in about a week ago, completely unroofed that portion of the building, reducing it to such a state as to render it quite unrepairable.

A monument has been erected of Oamaru stone in the enclosure surrounding the church at Maketu, at the expense of the Government, to Tohi te Ururangi, who fell mortally wounded at Kaokaoroa on the 28th April, 1864, when fighting against the rebel East Coast tribes, who were in arms against the Queen's authority. Some of Ngatipikiao objected to its being placed there, and it was some time before the difficulties were cleared away; but they ultimately consented, and assisted to place the stones in position. It is a pretty, tasteful piece of workmanship, and looks remarkably well where it now stands.

In conclusion, I wish to remark that, as this will be the last occasion on which I shall report on this district, I beg to bring under the notice of the Government that on my arrival in Maketu in 1870 I found matters in a very unsettled state, and great difficulties were experienced in carrying out the law; but now I am happy to state that there is a