

1. In the Opotiki District the Natives continue to be remarkable only for industry and good conduct. It is gratifying to be able to report that the Urewera tribe, who were until lately semi-hostile, now appear to be surrendering themselves voluntarily to the rule of law and of the Government. During the year members of the tribe charged with crime have been brought out of their mountain fastnesses by their chiefs for trial by our Courts, and they have even quietly permitted the survey of some of their lands, with a view to their being adjudicated on by the Native Land Court.

2. In the Maketu District, with the exception of one or two land disputes, matters have been quiet during the past year. The Natives are preparing themselves for the great Land Court which, it is presumed, will shortly be held to adjudicate on the titles of the lands alienated to Government.

The Arawa tribe appear to be very anxious at present to repair the flour mills which exist in various parts of their district, and have collected considerable sums of money for the purpose, which have in some cases been supplemented by the Government. I trust that this may be regarded as a sign of the revival of industrial pursuits amongst this tribe.

3. I am instructed in my report to mention any public works carried out by Natives. These have been but insignificant this year, owing not so much to the disinclination of the Natives to work as to the cessation of these works. The Whakatane Natives have completed the Te Teko Road, which has been in course of formation by them for some years, and have also made a portion of the Whakatane Valley Road. These works are of great local importance in giving access to land. Natives have also been employed from time to time on the Tauranga and Taupo Road.

4. There are nine Native schools now in operation in the Bay of Plenty, besides one at Torere, the building for which is completed, but to which no master has yet been posted. I have visited each school at least once during the past year, and am able to report favourably of the scheme as a whole. I do not claim, Sir, for these schools the almost marvellous effects which have at times been attributed to such institutions, but I think that a fair number of Native children, who otherwise would grow up in total ignorance, acquire through them the rudiments of education the effects of which must show in their after lives; and, apart from the question whether it is not the duty of the State to provide such education, I believe that any one who has a knowledge of the work done by these school-teachers will admit that the expenditure on them is not money lost.

At Opotiki several Native children are being educated at the European school, with good results. In accordance with your instructions a boarding-house has been erected near the district school at Tauranga, in order that the sons of some of the Bay of Plenty chiefs may be educated at that institution.

I trust in a few weeks to be able to report this in operation.

I have, &c.,

H. W. BRABANT,
Native Officer, in charge Bay of Plenty.

The Hon. the Native Minister,
Wellington.

No. 2.

Mr. H. T. KEMP, Civil Commissioner, to the UNDER SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,— Civil Commissioner's Office, Auckland, 30th August, 1877.

Referring to my telegrams, dated respectively the 16th and 20th instant, I have now the honor, in continuation, to furnish for the Hon. the Native Minister's information some details connected with the Native meeting held at the Kawakawa, Bay of Islands, on the 16th of August and following days.

The circumstances which led to the meeting may be briefly traced thus:—

1. Soon after the County Council Act was passed an election of members took place at Hokianga, but a very general feeling of disappointment took place, it was alleged, at the short notice given and, as a consequence, the return of men who had neither the *status* nor landed interests to qualify them for the post of County Councillors.

2. The Council, having assembled, proceeded to fix and levy rates, which were in some instances thought to be not only excessive but illegal. This, in the latter case, specially applied to land for which grants had been issued to more than one or two persons claiming an equal but in most instances an undefined or individual interest. In the absence of this, the assessment papers were (as by law required) addressed to and the amount levied in the name of the best man. This appears to have given, in some cases, great dissatisfaction, and it was all but resolved to resist the payment of the rates, and thus to set the local authorities at defiance. Better counsels, however, prevailed, and it was then determined to call a meeting, and to invite Native delegates from all the other counties north of Auckland, with a view to a general discussion upon the question of paying rates under the Acts above mentioned, and a time and place were thereupon fixed.

3. The settlement at the Kawakawa was recommended as a central position and the new hall thought of as the most suitable building within which to hold the conference. Application was accordingly made to Marsh Brown Kawiti, the principal resident chief of the district, to allow the meeting to be called together in his name; and by him circulars were addressed to the leading men in the adjoining counties, several of whom attended, others sending agents or deputies, Mangonui County being the only one unrepresented.

4. The House met at noon on the 16th, Mr. Wi Katene, ex-M.H.R., being voted to the chair. The first matter brought under notice was the sudden stoppage of traffic on the line of tramway which leads through the village by the manager of the mine, in which the resident Natives claim to have a certain vested interest. A resolution was carried asking the Native Minister to use his influence to have the obstruction removed for the use of foot passengers, until some better provision be made. Although some little longer notice might have been given, and on further explanation it was not intended to interfere with persons on foot, and the excitement which lasted for the time soon subsided. The