

SESS. II.—1879.

NEW ZEALAND.

NATIVE AFFAIRS, RAGLAN DISTRICT

(REPORT BY R. S. BUSH, ESQ., R.M., ON).

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

Mr. R. S. BUSH to the Hon. the NATIVE MINISTER.

SIR,—

Resident Magistrate's Office, Raglan, 1st November, 1879.

I have the honor to report for your information that I proceeded to Waikato on the 18th ultimo, for the purpose of visiting the Ngatihaua Tribe at its different settlements. I reached Tamahere on the 21st ultimo. Here I saw Te Hakiriwhi and other Natives at their different residences. Te Hakiriwhi, Te Raihi, and some others had that day returned from Hikurangi, where they had been to *uhunga*. Nearly the whole of these Natives reside in wooden houses, and are farming their land in the European manner.

On the following day I proceeded to Maungatautari, which is the largest settlement this tribe possess. The Natives living there have made a good road to Pukekura, on which there are three or four tolerably long side-cuttings. I estimate this work roughly at £300 or £400. This road was made at the instigation of, and under the superintendence of, Te Ngakau, the object being to have a passable road to Cambridge for the purpose of transporting their produce to market. Tukere and other chiefs expressed a wish that the Government would erect a bridge over the Hauoira Creek, the only stream which requires a bridge on the whole road. A bridge about thirty feet span would be ample, I think.

Upon rising the plateau on the Maungatautari side of this stream, you come upon very extensive cultivations of wheat, oats, and clover, enclosed with a ditch and bank fence, on both sides of the road for a considerable distance. These Natives are well off for food, and have about four hundred acres of wheat growing. They appear to be more industrious every year, which is certainly very gratifying. The Maungatautari people were rather crestfallen at the loss of their European miller, who had left them. On the 23rd, Tukere and myself searched for this man, and, after several hours' riding from place to place, we succeeded in finding him, when he refused to return to the mill on the terms of the old arrangement; and thus the matter remains. I fear this will prove somewhat discouraging to these people, and may prevent some of them from growing wheat as extensively as they might do if he were still there.

I left Maungatautari on the morning of the 22nd, for Mangakopara, near Aratitaha, where a meeting was being held. Hauauru, and other chiefs from Rangitoto, near Wharepapa, had arrived for the purpose of asking these Natives to retire to Hikurangi, because there was a land dispute between them and a man called Mika, of the Ngatiapakura Tribe, who had taken possession of a piece of land called Panehaku, which the Ngatihaua had passed through the Court and obtained a title for. Mika, I believe, alleges that he was not in this district at the time this land was adjudicated upon. Panehaku originally belonged to Ngatiapakura. The Ngatihaua claim it, I think, by right of conquest. In the days of Te Wharoa some fighting took place between those two tribes, when the former were defeated. A pa of theirs, at Rangiohia, was taken, and there were several small skirmishes in the vicinity of Panehaku and on the banks of the Mangapiko Stream. There was also a discussion as to some European cattle which had been driven off. Kaukiuta claimed compensation for hay eaten by the trespassing cattle. Upon his making a claim on the owner of the cattle, he was informed that two of his relatives—namely, Hori Tawariki and Haimona—had taken 1s. 6d. a head, and had entered into an arrangement to allow the cattle to run on their land for that sum per week per head. One of the animals—a horse—had died, and hence the discussion as to who was liable. Nothing was arranged. I suggested that each party should appoint some European friend as arbitrator, both previously agreeing to abide by their decision. This they agreed to do; so I trust nothing further will be heard of the matter. I believe the Natives implicated in the land dispute agreed to remove to Hikurangi. Whether they will do so remains to be seen.

On the 24th I proceeded to the Pukekura settlement. Many Natives from this settlement have for the last two years migrated to Mangapiko, where they have an extensive cultivation. These Natives are anxious that the Government should make a short piece of road from the confiscated line, to enable them to get their produce to Cambridge. They reside some distance beyond the confiscated boundary, and are willing to make their portion of the road to the confiscated line. This is the second

occasion they have mentioned the matter to me. I promised to bring the matter to your notice. The late Native Minister entertained the idea, and promised to assist these Natives. I do not think the distance from the swamp road to the confiscated line is more than a mile. It appears to me that it would be worth while acceding to requests of Natives for roads over the confiscated boundary, especially in cases where the cost would not be great. The desire for Government roads is entirely a new feature amongst the Kingite Natives, and deserves to be fostered, as it breaks through one of their strictest laws. The portion of the road which the Natives would make would be through swamps. I do not think there is any swamp from the swamp road to the confiscated boundary line. These Natives complain that they cannot ascertain where the public roads are: they have asked various Europeans, but did not obtain the information they desired. I think you will agree with me that this is a matter worthy of consideration, as anything which is likely to increase agricultural pursuits amongst the Natives must prove beneficial to the welfare of the two races.

On the following day I proceeded to Maungakawa, when I found the Natives contented, and well supplied with both potatoes and flour.

From here I proceeded to Paritu, where I slept. The majority of the Natives of this settlement were away eel-catching in the Piako. These people seemed contented, and their crops looked remarkably well.

On the following morning I left for the Matamata settlements, which are scattered about the banks of the Waitoa River. At Ngaturape there are only two families living. At the next settlement there are the same number, but these people were away in the bush after *tawharas*, so I did not see them. At Matarakutia the Ngatirangi section of the Ngatihaua reside. These people were all absent planting potatoes on the banks of the Waihou River, consequently I did not see them. At Matamata proper, where I stayed that night, I found about thirty Natives, all well dressed, with an abundance of food. At this settlement I noticed marked increase in the number of new-born infants. These Natives who reside at Maungakawa, Paritu, and Matamata Settlements are the friendly portion of the Ngatihaua Tribe. At nearly all these settlements there are large tracts of land, from two to thirty acres, of grass and clover. It is only within the last two years that these Natives have commenced to plant artificial grasses for their animals; heretofore they have let their animals roam where they liked. These Natives possess some tolerably strong, able-looking draught horses. Everywhere the Natives appear to take more interest in agricultural pursuits, and to be more settled. They do not appear to be so ready to listen to the strange stories that are circulated amongst them—stories which a few years ago kept them in a state of doubt, which consequently prevented them from settling down the same as they appear now to have done. I was unable to visit Wharepapa on this occasion, but will take an early opportunity of doing so. At this settlement reside the sons of the late William Thompson, with a few others of their tribe. There have been several deaths amongst this tribe since my last visit. Some very good men have died, particularly one young chief named Tuwhakaraina, who had a very good, well-farmed piece of land at Tamahere, of about six hundred acres. He will be much missed by both his own people and his European neighbours. Everywhere there was a marked improvement in the extent of the cultivations and fencing, showing a desire to return to their former industrious habits. Another thing I could not help remarking on this occasion—namely, the utter want of speculation as to the fortune of the King movement, a question which up to the present time has received much attention at their hands. There were a good many inquiries as to whether it was a fact that the late Government were defeated, and, if that were the case, whether their successors would follow out the same policy or initiate a totally new one. I stated that I did not think there would be any material change from the policy which had been followed for the last ten years.

The Hon. the Native Minister, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

R. S. BUSH, R.M.

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