

more or less, during the months of December, January, and February.

We find the dust rather bad here, but feel disposed to put up with anything for the sake of having had such a glorious drive. By-and-by, out of the dust in the distance loomed a black object. I asked what it was, and was told the coach from Matata, waiting at the finger post to exchange mails and passengers. Our number was here increased by two gentlemen, who looked agreeably fresh and clean to our coachful of dusty travellers.

At 1.30 we arrived at Tekeko, on the banks of the river Rangitaiki. Here we dismounted, shook off as much dust as possible, and went into the hotel for dinner. There is no bridge over the river here. Vehicles are taken across in a punt, which is swung over by the current, and prevented from going out of its course by wire ropes. I was taken across first of all, and got a snap-shot of the coach and passengers crossing afterwards. The river is very pretty, willows bending to the water's edge on both sides; the loaded punt swinging slowly across was a picture one would wish to represent in natural colours.

Fresh horses again here, so they are not over-worked—about 20 miles for each team, as nearly as they can arrange it.

From Tekeko to Whakatane we passed



AT TE TEKO. THE PUNT WHICH ACTS AS A FERRY.

many homesteads, fine paddocks of maize, cattle grazing by the road-side, and every evidence of cultivation of the land. Although so far from Rotorua we had

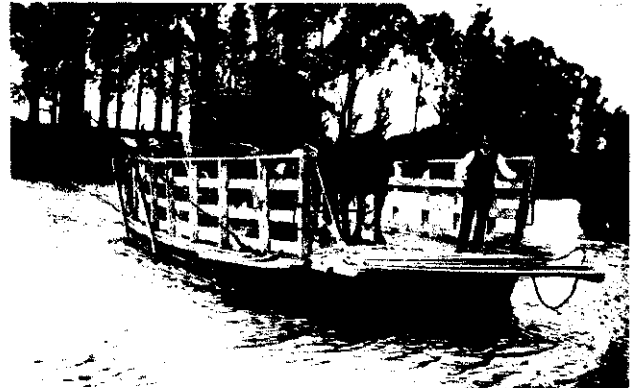
not lost all traces of hot springs, but passed one some 10 miles from Whakatane, which seemed to be much used by Maoris.

There is still the Whakatane river to cross and no bridge yet to use, although one is in course of construction. Usually the coach drives to the bank of the river, and the passengers alight and are taken across to the other side in a small boat; mails and luggage likewise. The driver then gets into the stern of the boat, with two horses, held by a rope, swimming behind, while the remaining horses follow of their own accord. A small coach and brake are found waiting on the opposite bank, in which the remaining two miles are travelled. But on this particular day of which I am writing the river was low, tide being out, and we forded, some half mile higher up, saving all the trouble.

A good many of the inhabitants of Whakatane have their homes in this part, but the township proper is not seen until we turn a sharp corner, between two picturesque rocks, and drive up the one and only street. It is a pretty place, one can see at a glance, and has not nearly so "out of the world" an aspect as one would suppose, being so far removed from a railway. We drove up with a final flourish in front of the post office at about 5 o'clock, feeling quite satisfied that we had had one of the prettiest and most interesting drives in that part of the world.



IN THE BUSH.



CROSSING THE RIVER AT TE TEKO.

A GLORIOUS DRIVE—ROTORUA TO WHAKATANE.



THE OFFICERS OF NO. 1 COMPANY, GARRISON ARTILLERY VOLUNTEERS.

Brown, photo.



DECORATED TANK IN CAMP, SHOWING THE WAY ENTHUSIASM WAS WORKED UP.