

gum diggings, the miserable shelter they provide, and the low diet to which they subject themselves, added to which in some instances is the effect of intemperance upon constitutions ill prepared by exposure and privation to resist the attacks of any epidemic which may visit the district.

Their agricultural pursuits are confined principally to the cultivation of the potato, kumara, corn, and uwhi, on which they bestow the greatest attention, all other employments being relinquished until their crops are in the ground. The same attention is given to harvesting these crops. The Maori has in a great measure to depend upon his own exertions for the amount of provisions he may be enabled to secure, hence the care and attention always bestowed upon these cultivations. The growth of wheat until lately had been altogether abandoned, but is now occupying their attention. A fair sprinkling of grain was produced last year, and a much greater proportion of land is being sown at the present time.

The progress of Public Works undertaken by the Natives is reported by those who have the supervision of these works as being satisfactory; many are at the present time employed upon the roads, some under contract, others as day laborers, and are executing the work in a satisfactory manner. Many are engaged in the timber trade in Hokianga and Whangaroa, at which employment they have the opportunity of making excellent wages. Numbers are scattered over the gum diggings, of the extent of which some idea may be formed by the enormous quantity of gum imported into Auckland from the Northern ports.

The question of education has lately been discussed by the Natives of this district, and taken up by some with an earnestness which promises success, but many do not as yet discern its full importance; they recognise the need of some tuition for their children, but not the duty of contributing towards the funds necessary for providing that tuition, being too much led away with the idea that all should be done for them. This feeling, however, it may be hoped, will in time give way to the example shown by others amongst them, who have already largely contributed towards the erection of places of worship, and who are equally ready to assist in the establishment of schools for their children.

The opposition formerly offered on the part of the Natives to the occupation of their lands by the settlers is fast giving way to a disposition to sell and lease. Good arable land has already been leased, and large blocks are being offered for sale. This indicates an increasing confidence in the minds of the Natives towards their European neighbours, and an evident desire to see the country occupied.

Much interest is manifested by them as to the probable result of reported overtures made to the Government by the Waikato Natives, and a hope generally expressed that successful negotiations may be established and a lasting peace secured to the Colony.

In conclusion, I would remark that whatever may be the faults and failings of this people, their loyalty towards the Government and friendship for the settlers will, I think, be acknowledged as an indisputable fact; and I venture to affirm that for the last seven and twenty years no portion of the aboriginal inhabitants of this Colony has caused the Government less trouble and anxiety than the two powerful tribes of Ngapuhi and the Rarawa.

I have, &c.,

EDWD. M. WILLIAMS, R.M.

No. 4.

E. W. PUCKEY, Thames, to the Hon. the NATIVE MINISTER.

SIR,—

Native Office, Thames, 9th July, 1872.

In reply to your circular of the 3rd ultimo, I have the honor to report that during the last three years the feeling of the Natives towards the Government has been steadily improving; the firm and conciliating policy which has been carried out through the whole Colony has born good fruit, and this district has not been behind other districts in this respect. Those who three years ago were rabid Hauhaus, jealous of the name of Queen or Government, appear now to be only waiting a fit and proper opportunity of gracefully relinquishing their adherence to the King party. A retrospective glance at what took place at your visit to Ohinemuri in December, 1869, as compared with the incidents of your recent visit in company with His Excellency the Governor, will better explain than any words of mine can, the great change that has gradually, and perhaps almost imperceptibly to themselves, been coming over their thoughts and feelings; and not at Ohinemuri alone has this been the case; Hauhaus on the East Coast of the Thames Peninsula, as well as at Piako, have kept pace with their neighbours and colleagues at Ohinemuri. Whilst in other parts of my district those who have all along been friendly evince the most lively satisfaction, not only that their Hauhaus relatives and neighbours are ready to forsake their fanaticism, but at the prospect of an early settlement of those difficulties which have so long disturbed the peace of this country.

Physical and Moral condition.—The Natives appear to be just so far advanced in civilization as to make them aware that there are certain advantages likely to accrue to them by their becoming members of a community with their pakeha neighbours, yet at the same time they are unwilling to give up their natural rights, and share with their pakeha friends the privileges of society. It is, however, satisfactory to notice their growing appreciation of the advantages of education; they are becoming daily more alive to the great disadvantage it has been to themselves that they so much neglected, in the earlier years of the Colony, to avail themselves of the scanty means placed at their disposal for the education of their children. I trust ere long to establish a school for the education of Native children at Ohinemuri.

Agricultural Pursuits.—It was quite encouraging last spring, in visiting several Native kaingas here and there in this district, to see the Natives on so much greater a scale than usual, preparing land for the reception of their crops. Many of them, poor themselves, purchased ploughs and harness, whilst some have spent considerable sums of money in the purchase of cows, and are going in for stock breeding on quite an extensive scale. But there is a vice growing fast upon them—I allude to drunkenness; there is rarely a meeting which takes place in which there is not a very considerable