

With regard to Native schools, the one opened at Iruharama in September last has proved a great success. There are over fifty scholars in attendance, and the progress made is truly astonishing. The teacher, Mr. Scott, has been most indefatigable in his labours, and gets on very well with the Natives, who seem to have a great respect for him. He has made himself very useful amongst them in dispensing medicine supplied by the Government, and, where his advice has been regarded, cures have been effected and life saved. The Natives during the past year have been comparatively healthy, there having been no deaths from epidemic or fatal accident, and the mortality has been less than usual. A second schoolhouse has been erected at Parikino, and will be opened in the spring, with, I trust, a good attendance of children. The site, a reserve of 137 acres, is favourably situated, and I have every reason to believe the middle and lower river Natives will take advantage of this institution as a means of affording some education to their children.

A much greater interest is now taken in the matter of schools, the Natives having become fully alive to their importance, and I believe that these schools will be well supported, and that much good will result therefrom. Next Christmas it has been arranged that a school feast be held at Iruharama, to which the scholars at Parikino will be invited. The gathering will be a large one, as all the parents and relatives of the children will attend to witness the enjoyment afforded to the young folks by a Christmas gathering. By this means an impetus will be given towards the support of schools, and the effect upon the Natives generally will prove beneficial. The Iruharama people have subscribed over £50 towards the cost of the schoolhouse, and the quarterly subscriptions from parents of children attending the school have been paid very regularly. Considering that Native schools had become very unpopular in this part of the country, and education entirely neglected, the boarding-school system, and consequent removal of the children from their homes, having utterly failed, I have much pleasure in congratulating the Native Minister on the success so far obtained for the village-school system at Whanganui.

In *re* Maori mills, I would here mention that machinery, at a cost of £200, has arrived from Glasgow for the Pipiriki mill, and that the Natives are engaged in cutting fresh timber (totara) for a new mill house, to comport with the iron machinery, which is far too good to put into the old mill. By next year I hope to be able to report the completion of this mill, and its being in full operation.

Some of the absent Natives are about returning to Pipiriki to assist in putting up this mill, and I believe it will be a means of attracting thither again the scattered remnant of a once powerful tribe on the Whanganui River. Pipiriki, a place already noted in the past, will, I trust, ere long again assume its importance as the most flourishing and advantageously situated settlement on the river.

Owing to the high price of iron, there has been a delay in the operations connected with the mills at Karatia and Koriniti; but so soon as the necessary funds are raised (a portion having already been subscribed) steps will be taken to complete them, when there will be four flour-mills on the Whanganui River.

As shown by the late census (taken by myself), the Maori population on this river is over 2,000. I had previously estimated it at some 1,700, and I was much pleased at finding that the number exceeded my calculations.

I found a great disparity as regards the children, who, including both sexes, did not come up in number to either sex amongst the men and women; and at some of the settlements the paucity of children was quite melancholy to behold, and fully accounted for the rapid diminution of the inhabitants in those localities. Owing to this disparity, we may look for a great falling-off of the river population during the next twenty years.

The interest taken by the Natives in the *Karere Maori* still continues, and I have 120 paid Maori subscribers in my list, besides some ten European contributors, who have taken an interest in the paper now published in that language.

This paper does great credit to the Editor, and has been the means of disseminating much useful knowledge amongst the Natives, and is well worthy of their support.

I would further take this opportunity of referring to one or two other matters which may be deemed of interest. I am pleased to have to report favourably on the conduct of the old chief Mamaku, who, with his cousin Te Piki, are using their exertions for good in those districts, situated at the head waters of this river, and in the heart of the country. A survey has been commenced of a portion of their lands far away in the interior, by the sanction of these and other chiefs, and Mr. Munro, Government surveyor, is now at Tuhua engaged upon such service, which must be looked upon as a matter of great importance, seeing that it is the first instance of land being surveyed in those parts, hitherto looked upon as a sealed country.

Mamaku considers himself as the representative of the Government in that part of the country, and his influence is now used in support of law and order.

The chief Ropata Te Korohiti, brother of the late Wiremu Te Korohiti, of Waitara fame, paid a visit, with some sixty of his people, to Utapu this summer; and I have reason to believe that shortly he and the whole of his tribe, the Ngatiruru, some 200 souls, will entirely disconnect themselves with the Waikato King party, and will return to their homes on the Wanganui River. As soon as this takes place, it is my intention to extend my visits frequently to Utapu, the extreme boundary of my district, with the view of getting a school established there, and seeing after the interests of those Natives generally. I am glad also to be able to bear testimony to the important services rendered by Major Kemp in December last, in using his influence to keep back the tribes from interfering with the Horowhenua dispute, whereby serious complications were avoided, and the peace of the district kept and preserved. I was an eye-witness to his conduct on that trying occasion, and I feel bound once more to revert to another of the many services he has rendered the country.

I would here refer to the late visit paid by His Excellency the Governor to Whanganui, when several of the leading chiefs of my district had the honor of being presented to Her Majesty's Representative. His Excellency's speech to the Natives made a most favourable impression upon their minds, and they frequently allude to it, and are satisfied that in the Governor of the country they have a true friend and protector.