

the Urungawera hapu left Katikati in an open boat for Tairua, arriving there on the morning of the 9th. They saw Petera, and induced him to go and drink with them. After making him drunk and perfectly incapable, they led him to their boat under the pretext of taking him home, instead of which they took him to the mouth of the Tairua Harbour, and brutally murdered him. When Akuhata Tupaea was informed of this, he wrote to the Ngaiterangi chiefs informing them of the circumstance. I attended a meeting at Katikati, at which place the principal chiefs had assembled, and demanded the body of the murdered man, or to know where he was buried. The reply I got was, "It is in the ground at Otahu." My reasons for trying to find the body were that an inquest might be held, and legal proceedings commenced against the murderers. Almost all the chiefs present justified the murder, and went so far as to communicate with the Government, and stating that, as it was purely a Maori affair, no further notice of it should be taken. I was requested by the chiefs to send for Hemi Tuatua, a younger brother of Koikoi's, or he would share the fate of his brother, as he practised sorcery to the same extent as his brother. After such a caution, I thought it advisable to get Hemi Tuatua out of danger, consequently went to Tairua and brought him and his family to Tauranga, thence by steamer to Whakatane, where they are now living with their tribe (the Urewera). I called a meeting at Maungatapu, and requested that the murderers should be given up to justice. The chiefs asked for time to consider the question, and to communicate again with the Government; that the deed having been sanctioned by all the people, it was confined entirely to themselves. I told them that the law must be upheld, and that the murder could not be looked at in that light: that the act was a premeditated one. Previous to the Maungatapu meeting, the supposed murderers had been informed by their friends that they were going to be arrested, consequently made their escape to the Waikato, where they at present are. Had force been used to arrest the murderers at the time I was at Katikati, or afterwards, it could not have been done without bloodshed, and the country would be involved in a Maori war. They had the sympathy of two-thirds of the Ngaiterangi tribe. It also would have been the cause of raking up old grievances amongst themselves, that have taken years to smooth over. (I allude to old troubles between Ngatihe and Ngaiterangi, and of which you know.) The Ngatihe was the only hapu that did not justify the murder.

With the exception of that I have mentioned, there has been very little crime committed by the Natives of the district; the cases are one for assault, and six for drunkenness.

I am sorry to report that the Natives have lost nearly all their crops of wheat and oats. On account of the heavy rains during the harvesting months, they did not consider it worth the trouble to cut one-half of them, so turned their horses and cattle into the paddocks. If the season had been good, there would have been at least about 25,000 bushels of wheat, and about 3,000 bushels of oats. The potato crop has been very indifferent; the maize and kumera very good.

The disposition of the Natives is very favourable to the Government, and has been so for several years past. Some of them have adopted the Hau Hau prayers, from the idea that it will prevent sickness among them; it has no political signification whatever.

There are twenty-seven children on the roll of the Whareroa School, but the attendance is not very regular, on account of the parents taking the children with them to their cultivations. On the whole, I consider the school is favourably progressing.

No public work has been done by the Natives during the past year; many of them get employment from the settlers. No complaints against them have been made by the Katikati settlers, but rather the contrary. On the whole, the Natives are very well behaved and peaceably disposed.

I have, &c.,

The Under Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

HOPKINS CLARKE.

## No. 32.

Mr. F. E. HAMLIN, R.M., Maketu, to the Under Secretary, Native Department.

SIR,—

Maketu, Bay of Plenty, 18th May, 1876.

In transmitting the following report on the district under my charge, for the information of His Excellency's Government, I have the honor to state that I consider the aspect of Native affairs therein to be on the whole very satisfactory.

Three disputes relative to land have occurred during the last twelve months, the principal of which was obstructing the Government survey of "Te Puke" by Ngatiwhakaue, thereby preventing the speedy acquisition of that valuable block, and retarding its settlement by Europeans. The action of Ngatiwhakaue was a lawless one, as they have clearly no right to the land in question except temporary occupation, having no ancestral rights, and simply an unrecognized "toa" claim. The acknowledged owners, Waitaha, Rereamanu, and Te Puku-a-Hakoma, were anxious that the land should be surveyed, in fact assisting at the survey, that their negotiations with the Government might be brought to a successful issue; but one of the Land Purchase Commissioners deemed it advisable to stay proceedings to prevent troublesome complications. Another dispute arose relative to some land at Pikirangi, a small settlement on the banks of the Rotorua Lake, between Pokai te Waiatua and others, which still remains in abeyance. A third took place at Maketu, between Te Mapu, of Ngati-pikiao, and Miriata, the wife of Rotohiko Haupapa, which at one time threatened to create a very bad feeling; but it was temporarily arranged to await the decision of some tribunal to be appointed by the Government.

The morality of the district is such as is usual to be met with in all Maori settlements; petty crimes are of rare occurrence, drunkenness is decidedly on the decrease in Maketu, but I cannot speak so favourably of the inland kaingas, especially Ohinemutu, where intoxication and its consequent debaucheries are on the increase compared with last year. These facts arise, I imagine, from the constant influx of visitors, through whom the Natives obtain means of indulging in these debasing habits.