

1878.

NEW ZEALAND.

FURTHER REPORTS FROM OFFICERS IN NATIVE DISTRICTS.

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

No. 1.

Mr. E. W. PUCKEY, Thames, to the UNDER SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Native Office, Thames, 3rd June, 1878.

In compliance with your circular, No. 11, 25th April, 1878, I have the honor to report as follows upon the condition of the Natives in my district:—

1. *Political.*

The accession of the present Ministry, in which one of themselves is a member, has afforded them much gratification. They hailed the change with pleasure as an earnest of much good to follow, and have been watching with the most intense interest the progress of negotiations with the King party.

2. *Industrial.*

In respect of agricultural pursuits, I regret that I am unable to report favourably, as the Natives do not appear to make any advance whatever. The last season, however, being an exceptionally favourable one for the potato crop, I am glad to say they are placed beyond the reach of absolute want of food during the present year.

3. *Physical and Moral.*

With regard to their physical and moral condition no material change can be reported, but I might state that a free-love movement was introduced by the late Ngatipaoa chief, Tarapipipi, which, however, found little favour, though, under his auspices and at his invitation, a considerable number of professed adherents of the Hauhau party removed from their homes at Ohinemuri, Hikutaia, Kerepehi, Waitakarawia, and Whakatiwai, and formed a new settlement at Te Hoi-a-Tainui, where for the most part they still remain.

Te Kooti has been on a tour endeavouring to promulgate his own peculiar views of theology. I understand a sort of camp-meeting was held in the country somewhere between Te Aroha and Katikati. His wife had, prior to that, been conducting special services at different places in this district, and had made a good many converts; but I do not think that any political significance need be attached to this fact, as the Hauraki tribes are unmistakably loyal.

Hauhauism, which was thought by so many a year or two back to be waning, appears to be gaining fresh ground to some extent here at least. An influential section of Ngatitamatera, living on the northern part of this peninsula, have adopted it, though I cannot think they will consider themselves bound by its anti-land-selling principles whilst they have a single acre to sell.

4. *Employment on Public Works.*

The Thames County Council, I have much pleasure in stating, have been successful beyond the most sanguine expectations in dealing with the Native difficulties, which have hitherto interposed what has all along been held to be an impassable barrier to the forming of roads in this district. The main trunk road between Shortland and Ohinemuri has been opened for traffic between the former place and a point on the Hikutaia River, where a substantial bridge has been built. A road between Paeroa and Te Puke is in course of formation by a party of Natives who have always stood by us, and that in the face of the determined opposition which has so consistently been made by the anti-progress party. A bridled roadway from Ohinemuri to Te Aroha has been completed, whilst another between Ohinemuri and Katikati is being rapidly pushed on.

A road has also been partially completed, under the management of the Harataunga Highway Board, between Kapanga and the southern boundary of the Coromandel County, which has been made available for traffic southwards from Coromandel nearly as far as Kereta. On all these works Natives have been employed, and, I am pleased to say, with few exceptions, have given satisfaction to their employers.