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Opotiki

June 3rd 1872

My dear Sir,

In accordance with your wish that I should write to you privately on all matters concerning the natives, I beg to inform you that I returned last week from a visit to the natives living down the coast, at Tere, Maraeuni, Omai, Te Kaha &c. I was very much pleased with the bearing of and sentiments expressed by the natives and was much struck by their apparent wealth and prosperity as compared with those residing at Waitato, Napier &c.

I am sorry to find that the crops all along the coast have been to some extent a failure, the potato crop being a very poor one, while the corn was almost entirely destroyed by a gale of wind; on the other hand however the kumera crop, on which the natives on this coast to a great extent depend, is admitted every where to have been a very poor one.

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The natives, everywhere

are very anxious for road work. Williams King's people have already taken a contract for work on the road near Tovera and are only waiting for tools to begin. The Kaha natives particularly requested me to urge on the Government their wish to be employed in this way. I may observe that the road between Maraceni and Le Kaha is a very bad bush track almost impassible in bad weather and I should be extremely glad if the Government are able to continue the road works to the last named settlement.

Natives from all parts of the Coast intend going to Major Popata's "Kua" next month. In some way or other the report has got amongst them that the "Luna" is to be sent to take them down to it, and I was asked every where if this were true. Williams King and others expressed an opinion that it would unduly exalt one tribe over the others if the fact were to send the steamer to take natives to Popata's meeting. I told the natives that I had no information on the subject but thought the report improbable.

Le Tatana is building a large Romanya house at Maraceni, and expects to have it finished this month.

I hope to be able to re-establish all the native schools, and hope you will be able to instruct me that the

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Government will pay the teachers salary for the first year or two. I do not think that if the natives subscribe to the building, they could also, at once contribute their share of the salary. I found some opposition to the establishment of schools. I believe the chief Te Mokema who has lately visited the district, urged the natives not to consent to them. His idea is, that they should try to get clergymen amongst them, who he thinks could be got for nothing and would also act as school teachers as they used to formerly.

Tamaitoaha & others have gone to a Hui at Ruatahuna, I am told the subject for discussion is the complicated land question.

I remain

Dear Sir

Yours very respectfully

Herbert M. Stobant

Sir.

The Hon Donald M. Stewart

He He He

Auckland