

R. O. Stewart Esq.—
continued.

under the rule or influence of the Government. I know of its condition only by report, and I believe that the Natives there have plenty, and lead comfortable, happy, and, to a great extent, contended lives. Many among them are as loyally affected towards the British Government as any Natives in New Zealand—which is not saying much for them,—while others who have lost their lands by confiscation are unquiet, and naturally feel unsettled while living on the lands of other tribes, to which they were in former times more or less hostile. So far as I can learn, the chief men of these Waikato exiles are inclined to peace; more from a conviction of the impossibility of their reconquering their own lands than from an acknowledgment of the justice of their deprivation. If they were inclined to do mischief by ravaging the European settlements of Waikato they could readily destroy homesteads and townships in detail, doing what they thought fit with the inhabitants and their property. The state of quiescence which now subsists we owe chiefly, if not entirely, to the sense of honor with which Maoris are as a race inspired, and very little if at all to the few armed men maintained by us on the frontier. Maoris will not commence to harass or ravage our settlements until they have made up their minds to have war, and they will then probably take that way of making a commencement. These peaceably inclined, though disaffected Natives, are always more or less liable to be led away and engaged in war by any hot-headed fanatic or patriot who may come amongst them: for one great evil of Maori society is that there is no strictness in the subordination or government which appears to exist amongst them,—every person doing very much “as seemeth right in his own eyes.” The old war councils which executed summary justice on offenders have long since given place to the deliberative runangas, which are very good copies of our legislatures and courts, so far as the work of debating or sentencing go, and very poor imitations indeed, so far as executive powers go; for sentences remain dead letters, and “laws” are enforced only when the objects to be attained thereby are popular and desired. Thus the criminal escapes all the more readily that has been excessively bold and lawless. It is not to be expected that under Maori rule any social progress can take place. They must remain unimproved until the Government of the Colony shall be in a position to rule them with effect and authority. Half measures, or permissive “Government” so called, will never have any good effect, but merely tend to bring the powers assumed and attempted to be exercised into contempt. Such was the case in Waikato before the war broke out in 1863, when it was attempted to govern the Maoris *à l’Anglaise* without having the upper hand of them. In fact, the weakness of our hold over Maoris, even in settled districts, has been recognized in our statute book by the exceptional legislation re-enacted and made still more special for Maoris no longer ago than the last session of the General Assembly. We had much better leave Maoris entirely alone, unless we are prepared to exercise a thorough control over them and to show them—perhaps thus drawing them into a better state of mind—how much good we can do to such Natives as are really under our Government.

R. O. STEWART,
Resident Magistrate.

No. 5.

BAY OF ISLANDS.

REPORT from R. C. BARTOW, Esq., Resident Magistrate, Russell.

R. C. Bartow, Esq.

INASMUCH as the value of a report of the nature of this which I am desired to furnish, depends not merely upon the opportunities that I may have enjoyed of obtaining the requisite information, but also upon the amount of experience in Native matters acquired during my residence in New Zealand, fitting me for such a task, I may premise that I arrived in this Colony in 1843; for seven years was engaged in agriculture in the vicinity of Auckland, for the succeeding eight years attending to my stock station on the Great Barrier Island, at both of which places I almost constantly employed Native labour, and have held the situation of Resident Magistrate at Russell for the last nine years, to which period I limit my present observations. I ought to add, as qualifying the worth of my opinions, that although able to read, write, and understand the Maori language passably, I do not speak it either fluently or grammatically.

During the three first years of my residence in this place the Natives depended chiefly for their supplies of clothing and tobacco upon the demand for agricultural produce, caused by the resort of American whale-ships to this port, supplemented, I regret to add, by the proceeds of the prostitution of their women, for at that time, as indeed for the preceding thirty years, every girl, before marriage, was considered as an article of commerce. Food was then grown in sufficient abundance for their own wants, and although some few Natives drank hard, the practice of rum-drinking was not nearly so general or habitual as at present. Of late years the Natives have become much more dependent upon the Colonists for their clothing, and provisions as well—flour, rice, sugar, being largely consumed, and the almost complete cessation of whaling in these seas from the United States of America, since the civil war in that country, having cut off their former sources of revenue, the funds for the purchase of the articles wanted have been supplied by occasional sales of horses, cattle, or pigs, and by digging kauri gum, the value of that article shipped from this port alone, reaching in some years to £10,000.

I have found the Natives of my district, upon the whole, amenable to the sentences or decisions of the law; and although such things as rescues or attempts have occurred, yet, after discussion and reflection, prisoners have been surrendered and justice has had its way. But I must record that they do not consider themselves bound to obey the law because it is the law, but rather submit that they may stand well with their Magistrate or the Government, owing to a feeling that at some future time they may require a favour at their hands. Every warrant issued or judgment given by myself up to the present time has been duly executed or satisfied.

Population.

I append a table of the census of the Hundred of Kororareka, taken, nominally, in November, 1864. Since that time a reduction of two per cent. in numbers has taken place, not, however, equally distributed, the Ngaitawake having been the *hapu* (subdivision of tribe) most reduced.