

H. Wardell, Esq.—
continued.

for their comprehension, and that consequently their cases do not come before the Court as fully as they desire; and that in the constitution of the Court the Native element is not sufficiently powerful when constituted without juries.

In conversation with Natives on the subject of representation, they have generally expressed dissatisfaction with the boundaries of the districts into which the North Island is divided, because in each district is included country the inhabitants of which have been in open rebellion, with other country in which no hostilities have taken place; and they urge that a more equitable adjustment of the representation would give one Member to that portion of the Island south of Wanganui and Napier, one to the country north of Hauraki, one to the East Coast, and one to the West; or, if the representation cannot be increased, then that one Member only should represent the whole country between the Northern and Southern districts.

I regret to observe that in the matter of Native education nothing is being done in this district. Owing to the apathy and indifference of parents, very few children attended the school at Papawai when open, and it is now closed.

The balance of the fund known as the 5 per cent. fund has not yet been appropriated. I believe it might with advantage be applied towards the erection of a hospital for the use of both races in this district.

Resident Magistrate's Office,
Wairarapa, 6th July, 1868.

I have, &c.,
HERBERT WARDELL,
Resident Magistrate.

No. 16. MANGONUI.

REPORT from W. B. WHITE, Esq., Resident Magistrate, Mangonui.

Resident Magistrate's Office, Mangonui, 5th September, 1868.

W. B. White, Esq. SIR,—

I have the honor to state that I regret your circular letter of 15th February last, No. 71-2, should have remained so long unanswered; but I was away from February to June on duty as a Judge of the Native Land Court, and on my return so many things occupied my attention that I have not before had time to reply.

I was the first officer appointed by the Government to this district, in August, 1848, and have remained here from that time. I have therefore had twenty years' experience in this place as Resident Magistrate, and held the appointment of Civil Commissioner until the office was abolished in 1866.

Throughout the whole period the Natives have been uniformly friendly to Europeans. I have had, being the only representative of the Government here, much intercourse with them, and, as a body, I have ever found them most desirous to follow my instructions. Most of the principal chiefs have been Assessors in the Resident Magistrate's and Native Circuit Courts for many years, and I have found them impartial and painstaking in the administration of justice. The great difficulty was that the more serious cases, such as felonies, &c., they were inclined to treat very lightly, whereas offences of a moral nature they were disproportionately severe upon.

Prisoners committed have been marched through the heart of the country in charge of Native constables without hindrance, and lodged in gaol at Mangonui, or sent to Auckland for trial, with as much order and regularity as in a community of civilized persons. I allude to this as I believe this is the only country district in New Zealand where such an example of obedience to law by the Natives has been shown, unsupported by military power. Very few offences have been committed against Europeans; but when any have occurred, every effort has been made to bring the offender to justice. The last and most dreadful case was that of the murder of Mr. C. W. S. Smith, in Victoria Valley, on the 9th of April, 1867. The murderer was not discovered until March last, but in consequence of my absence the Natives, in giving the accused Hami te Hara up, attached a condition that he should not be tried by any magistrate but myself; he therefore remained in gaol until my return. It was perhaps fortunate for the ends of justice that this condition was made, for the long incarceration was the cause of turning the young man's heart from defiance and obstinacy to a feeling of deep sorrow for the crime he had committed, and a full confession of it.

The tribes occupying this district are Rarawa and Aupouri from Mangonui to the North Cape, and Ngapuhi from Mangonui to Whangaroa. The Rarawa Tribe occupy the country outside my district as far as Hokianga. Formerly they were a powerful and warlike tribe. On my first arrival, twenty years ago, on paying my first visit to Ahipara, I was struck by their numbers, their large villages and pas, occupied by a numerous population, and the extent of the cultivations, quantities of native produce being sent to Mangonui to supply the wants of the numerous whalers then visiting the port, besides wheat, corn, onions, exported to Auckland, and even Sydney. Now, I regret to say, the country is almost a waste, the population dwindled to a few hundreds. A census taken in 1858 gives the population of this district as 2,362. No census has been taken since, but I am satisfied that there is not that number in the district now.

About a year ago, a dispute about some land assembled two-thirds of the male adult population in Victoria Valley, about 300 fighting men; fifty years ago, I have heard from Mr. Puckey, of Kaitia, Nopera Panakareao's father could head a clan of over 2,000 fighting men. Such a fearful decrease in numbers is scarcely to be accounted for by the sudden advance of the white man, with his spirituous liquors and change of habits, but more perhaps to a nature exhausted by disease engendered by deleterious food, immoral habits, constant state of war and anxiety,—and of late years accelerated by the use of intoxicating liquors, idleness, scarcity of food, irregular and insufficient clothing, and their present custom of dwelling in small temporary huts, and lying on the damp ground.

Hauhauism is unknown in this district. I should consider it as the mere declaration of opposition to the white man, it being an old custom amongst the Maoris for their prophets, in time of war, to declare some superstition to distinguish them from their enemies. I believe myself that it will die out