

Owing to the letting of the Te Akau Block, the demand for flax and firewood, and other causes, they are and have been better fed and clothed than usual; and, happily, there has been little crime or drunkenness laid to their charge.

I give them also credit for more religious feeling, evidenced by their holding Divine Service more frequently, and by their building one chapel, and contracting (at a cost of £80) for the erection of another. This has been a remarkably healthy year with them, and I think the deaths are but very slightly in excess of the births.

I have, &c.,

WR. HARSANT,

Resident Magistrate.

The Hon. the Native and Defence Minister, Wellington.

No. 11.

Mr. R. S. BUSH, Raglan, to the Hon. the NATIVE MINISTER.

SIR,—

Resident Magistrate's Office, Raglan, 12th May, 1874.

I have the honor to furnish, for your information, the usual annual report on Native matters in the Raglan district.

Condition of Natives.

During the past year I have visited the different tribes resident in the district, making myself acquainted with the persons and dispositions of their various chiefs. There has been no infectious disease amongst them, nevertheless the mortality from the 1st of January, 1873, to the 31st December, 1873, amounts to no less than forty, the births for the same period numbering only thirty-eight, thus it will be observed that the deaths exceed the births by two. I find that the greatest mortality is amongst the infants, no less than twenty-two having died out of the thirty-eight born. This circumstance may in a great measure be attributed to neglect on the part of the parents.

The Registrar's records for the same period of the European population, numbering 305, show one death and twelve births. For full particulars on this subject, *vide* table attached to end of this report, compiled from records carefully kept by myself. The principal chief who died is Hetaraka Nero, of the Ngatimahanga Tribe, and a Native Assessor.

Two marriages have also taken place during the above period, in accordance with the rites of our Church, one couple belonging to the Ngatitahinga Tribe, and the other to Tainui. In the latter case the bride was the daughter of Kereopa Te Apa, a leading Hauhau chief of Aotea South, who was present in the church during the ceremony.

Their moral condition will bear comparison with that of other districts. I only do them justice when I say that they are the most sober and best conducted tribes I have ever been amongst, and in support of this I would here state that only three Natives were brought before the Resident Magistrate from the 1st January, 1873, to the present date,—one, a Hauhau, for petty larceny, one for assault arising out of a dispute for wages, and one for drunkenness; in fact, many of the Natives are staunch teetotallers. It is with great pleasure that I report so favourably on this point, the more so as it proves that they have the moral courage not to follow the exceedingly bad example set them by some of the inland tribes, more especially by those most attached to the so-called Maori King, who it appears have become great drunkards. Rewi and the Ngatimaniapoto Tribe are represented as being much annoyed and disgusted with Tawhiao and his more immediate supporters, for permitting and participating in so much unchecked drunkenness; so much so, that this craving for strong drink is alleged to be one of the causes for the coolness which, without a doubt, is springing up between the Waikato and Ngatimaniapoto Tribes.

The Tainui have erected a raupo church at one of their settlements. The building is neatly fitted up inside, and the cost of its construction was defrayed by the Natives themselves, assisted by a few European donations. The Ngatitahinga Tribe are on the eve of erecting a weather-boarded edifice, at a cost of £80, near Te Karaka, on Te Akau Block, for a religious purpose.

Disposition.

The tribes living in this district to as far as Aotea North are friendly, and were so throughout the late Waikato rebellion. Those resident on the southern side of Aotea Harbour and northern side of Kawhia, though formerly staunch supporters of the King movement and party, appear now to take little or no notice of the acts or mandates of their quondam master.

Many chiefs from Kawhia, such men as Hone Wetere, Te Tapihana, and others, who have kept aloof from all European intercourse since the commencement of the Waikato war, have, during the past year, come forth unsolicited from their isolation, and again visited our settlements.

On the 21st of November Hone te One's carved *whare* at Aotea was opened by Tiria, Tawhiao's sister, who was accompanied by Parehauraki, one of his wives, and his infant daughter. It was stated that these women had been especially deputed by him to perform this ceremony. The mere fact of a party of women being detailed for this work was looked upon as a good omen, auguring peace, by the friendly chiefs, it being a custom amongst their ancestors generally to send women to negotiate a truce, who sometimes were given to the hostile tribes as a surety of good faith, and whose wives in many instances they became, thus connecting the two tribes previously at enmity with each other. Tiria and party after this visited Raglan, where they remained three days, spending one afternoon at my house with Tawhiao's wife and infant daughter. Upon leaving in the evening she endeavoured to impress upon me "that if her brother and his party were not anxious to promote peaceful relations between the two races, she and her companions would not have entered a Pakeha's dwelling."

There is a portion of the Ngatimahuta Tribe resident at Kawhia South who persist in isolating themselves. It is under the leadership of Maneha and Hone Kiwi. The former of these was accused of being the instigator of the attack on Mr. Mackay on the occasion of his proceeding to Te Kuiti last year; the latter is a man of more inferior rank than Maneha, and is celebrated for being the ring-