

The employments chiefly occupying their time have been the management of their cultivations, on which they bestow much care and attention; kauri-gum-digging, which is a source of wealth to them; and, in the forest districts, the felling, squaring, and drawing out of kauri timber, at which employment all who choose to be industrious can earn remunerative wages, especially those amongst them possessed of bullock-teams, who realize large sums of money in drawing the timber from the forests. The whale fishery is also commanding the attention of Natives residing on the coast, who have now amongst them eight or ten boats equipped and manned for the purpose of bay whaling. In this enterprise they have been greatly encouraged by the success which attended their last season's fishing, when some hundreds of pounds were realized by the oil they sold.

The great drawback with the Natives is their wasteful abuse of time and means. With all their earnings, few amongst them have any thought of bettering their condition: they will hoard up their money, depriving themselves of the comforts of life, until some feast is given, a "hahunga" (taking up of bones) or a "tangi" (lament for the dead), when money and provisions will be squandered in the most reckless manner. They will sometimes keep up this extravagance for days together, sleeping at nights in the most exposed situations, and sickness and death may often be traced as the result of exposure at one of these meetings.

There has been much sickness amongst the Natives during the present year, and many deaths have occurred. Typhoid fever and dropsy have been prevalent in some of the villages, one after another being seized and taken off after a few days' illness. The pernicious custom which they adopt when a death takes place of crowding and even sleeping together in an apartment where the corpse is laid out, the want of cleanliness and fresh air, and the entire absence of the use of disinfectants, must tend to encourage the spread of disease amongst them. There is, I think, but little doubt that as a race they are fast dwindling away.

Courts have been held regularly at Waimate, Russell, Whangaroa, and Kawakawa. The Natives are orderly in their attendance, and the decisions given are readily submitted to. During the year four Natives have been imprisoned for larceny, two for horse-stealing and house-breaking, and one for horse-stealing only. In each of these cases the prisoners were arrested without opposition, and the law allowed to take its course, although in two instances the young men were sons of chiefs, whose tribes would, a few years back, have offered strenuous opposition, and tendered any sum of money rather than they should be sent to gaol. These cases verify the remarks I made in last year's report, that the Natives are beginning to see the justice of our laws, and anxious that they should be administered alike to both races. They are gradually being led to respect the law, and each case successfully carried out cannot but have a salutary effect, tending as it must do to weaken that spirit of opposition which is still latent in the minds of some of the more turbulent characters amongst them.

A sincere regret for the death of Sir Donald McLean has been generally expressed. The intelligence was received with much feeling, and great sympathy manifested, the Natives remarking that in him they have lost an old and well-tried friend, who for many years had interested himself in the welfare of the Maori race, and whose name will long be remembered by them.

I have, &c.,

The Under Secretary, Native Department,
Wellington.

EDWARD M. WILLIAMS,
Resident Magistrate.

No. 5.

Mr. H. T. KEMP, Civil Commissioner, Auckland, to the UNDER SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Civil Commissioner's Office, Auckland, 28th May, 1877.

As requested, I beg leave briefly to make the following annual report on the state of the Natives in the District of Auckland, for the information of the Hon. the Native Minister:—

1. I have pleasure in saying that tranquillity still prevails, with a very general desire to submit to and to be governed by those laws which are recognized and obeyed by their more favoured brethren, and to accept the same in the belief of their justice and impartial administration as between members of either race.

2. *Offences Committed.*—The number of convictions, chiefly for minor offences, shows a diminution in those crimes which have come before the ordinary Courts. Cases, however, of debt, which for the most part consist of overdrawn accounts, and are probably in excess of what they should be in an admittedly legitimate trade, are nevertheless, from policy and other circumstances, allowed to stand over, or become the subject of a friendly suit or compromise; and in cases of this kind kauri gum is the chief article of exchange, which for the most part is collected during the winter months, and in which members of the tribes of all ages and both sexes are engaged. They are also producers of cattle and sheep, but only to a limited extent, which does not amount in any case to an appreciable item.

3. *As to their social state*, no change for the better is really perceptible: the improvident and generally indolent habits of the Native people continue to mark a slow progress, if any, and from this standpoint alone it is to be feared that they must fall very far short in the race of civilization that lies before them. The general health of the Natives in the vicinity of Auckland is good; the mortality not quite so great as in the preceding year, while in the treatment of their