

sick a much greater faith in the skill of the medical profession prevails, and a desire in extreme cases to become inmates of the Colonial Hospital.

4. *On Education.*—The establishment of free Government schools, specially designed for acquiring a knowledge of the English language, has impressed the minds of some parents with the value and importance, in a political and social point of view, of obtaining for their children an English education; but how far that impression, destitute as it is of discipline with their offspring, love of novelty, and want of perseverance on their own part, which are some of the weak points in the social economy of the Native race, will lead to practical and beneficial results, time alone can determine.

5. *As to holders of land*, whether as individuals or in communities, experience has, I think, shown that the trade in land has tempted many avaricious persons to throw off and ignore the obligation due to the tribe or community long recognized as a custom, usage, or Native law for common defence, and thus to deprive the weaker members of their own and children's inheritance. A remedy suggests itself, I think, in the affirming of titles to *individuals* as a rule, and thus render the occupation and purchase of land more equitable, and at the same time offer greater facilities to *bona fide* colonists for the peaceful and prosperous settlement of the country. The abandonment also by the Government at this stage of the purchase of Native lands seems to be not only wise but politic for many reasons.

Lastly, as to the loyalty of the Natives: few will doubt, I think, the acceptance by the Natives as a body of the better alternative—viz., the Crown's in preference to the divided authority of Maori chieftains. The employment, therefore, at present, of many of these influential chiefs by the Government will continue to fill up the void they must feel, whose recompense, however, should, I venture to think, be made in proportion to their zeal and activity, whatever that occupation may be: invidious comparisons are not unfrequently drawn between the drones and the workers, and the amount of pay severally drawn by them.

Finally, I desire respectfully to bring before the notice of the Hon. the Native Minister the ready help given by many of the chiefs in this district when called upon; also the willingness and submission with which they (through this office) apply to the Government for advice, as well as the assistance and hospitality they show to visitors of their own race who visit Auckland as a centre of commercial and social attraction.

The Under Secretary, Native Department,
Wellington.

I have, &c.,
H. T. KEMP,
Civil Commissioner.

No. 6.

Mr. E. W. PUCKEY, Thames, to the UNDER SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Native Office, Thames, 8th June, 1877.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your circular, calling for the annual report on the state of the Natives in my district, and in compliance therewith to report as follows:—

(1.) *Condition—Social and Moral.*

I cannot, under this head, report any marked change as to the condition of the Natives at the Thames, the process of change being so gradual as year by year to leave but little trace of its effects. There is one thing, however, certain, and that is that the old chiefs are passing away into another state of being, and are giving place to a new generation, who view or are likely to view the rapid progress of the European race with less jealous eyes.

Since the date of my last annual report, two leading chiefs, one of Ngatimaru and one of Ngatipaoa—that is to say, Rapana Maunganoa and Tamati Tangiteruru—have died. I need hardly say in reference to them that they each took a prominent part in tribal matters, and were looked up to with much deference by their respective tribes.

(2.) *Industrial Pursuits.*

I regret that I am not able to say on this head that the Natives here are any better than in some other parts of the colony in reference to their industry, for I do not believe they are. It is true there are a few exceptions—i.e., there are a few who during the planting season will cultivate a sufficient area of land to maintain themselves and their families. Most of them, however, prefer a sort of hand-to-mouth existence, on the principle perhaps of “little eat, little care”—a principle which is better in theory than in practice. Of course, the above remarks must not be taken as reflecting in any way upon the owners of the Thames Gold Field.

There is a custom which, I think, has rather grown upon the Natives of late years than the contrary, and as it tends materially to impoverish them, and rob them of the result of such negative industry as they possess, might very properly, I think, be referred to under this head: I mean the custom of the *uhunga*—“wailing for the dead.” It appears to be a universally-accepted fact amongst them that they cannot be strong to cry unless there is not only a sufficiency but a superabundance of food provided; and they consider that it redounds to the glorification and credit of the departed and also of his or her deceased relatives, as well as a proof of respect to their visitors, that a lavish supply should be made—not, as in days gone by, of food obtained and prepared by the Natives themselves, but of the imported luxuries of the wealthy pakeha.