

people observe it, and except in the presence of visitors the elders are becoming somewhat lukewarm.

The health of the Maoris generally is much the same as in recent years—that is, not very good. The demand for medicine has been much greater, but this is due probably to a more friendly status rather than a more unhealthy condition.

Petty larceny has perhaps increased, and there have been a number of convictions under that head; but only one serious crime has been committed. I allude to the murder in Ngaruawahia Gaol of Samuel Morgan by another prisoner named Te Pati, a King Native undergoing a sentence of imprisonment for larceny. The motive of the crime is supposed to have been revenge for some real or fancied injury, coupled no doubt with the desire to regain his liberty. There has been very little comment about this affair, but it is generally admitted by the Natives of all classes, including even the murderer's own relatives, that he deserved no mercy: indeed, they marvel that his execution has been delayed so long. I am afraid, however, that there are not wanting those who think that the prisoner's greatest offence was that of permitting himself to be captured. Had he succeeded in evading the police and settlers who made the capture, he would no doubt have found an asylum with the murderer of Packer, and other ruffians at Te Kuiti.

Drunkenness is decreasing in a very marked manner. It is seldom met with now in any of the townships, except Cambridge, and in a less degree there than formerly, while the practice of conveying ardent spirits to their own villages has ceased entirely.

There is but one Native school in the district: I allude to that in Karakariki. From what I have heard, I do not think that the results obtained are, in any way, commensurate with the cost of this establishment. A few pupils have been admitted to the "common schools," and the plan of teaching Maoris side by side with European children appears to me to be far more satisfactory than the ordinary Native Schools Act system. The Kingites profess to be opposed to schools of any kind.

A difficulty occurred about the survey of some land on Pirongia, which had been awarded by the Compensation Court some years ago to a half-caste family, who were compelled by circumstances to dispose of it. Some designing individual, by representing to Te Ngakau and others that this land had been diverted from its proper use, induced them to warn off the surveyor who had been instructed by the purchaser to measure it. It transpired, subsequently, that the action of the Maoris was merely formal, and that no further obstacles would be put in the way of the purchaser. The survey, however, has not been carried out, for the owner of the land, disgusted at the delay, decided to let the matter drop for a time.

The Hon. the Native Minister met Manuhiri, at his request, at Kaipiha, in January. The interview was very cordial, but no political discussion took place. In February he was invited by Manga (Rewi) to meet him at Alexandra, and again at Taupo, in March. On both these occasions long discussions on the land question were held, Manga urging that a friendly understanding would soon be brought about if land dealings were to cease—more especially in the Ngatiraukawa country—for a time. The Hon. Dr. Pollen assured him that it was not the intention of the Government to do more than complete their transactions; but, at the same time, private individuals, of both races, must be free to buy and sell or lease land as they like. The people of Taupo, and an important section of Ngatiraukawa, who were present at the Taupo meeting, said that they would "do as they thought best with their land;" and, further, that they had "applied for a sitting of the Native Land Court to be held in that country as soon as possible!" This serves to show that Kingite influence, as far as land-dealing is concerned, has been much weakened.

A party of Armed Constabulary have been employed on the Cambridge to Taupo Road, which they have formed and bridged nearly up to the limit of the alienated land, a distance of about twenty miles from Cambridge. Hunia te Ngakau warned the officer in charge of the work not to proceed with it. The party were then armed, and no further interference took place. I believe that Te Ngakau acted upon his own responsibility.

The opening of the road between Waipa and Raglan is, I believe, in contemplation. It is a very necessary work. Objections will probably be made to this work too, but it is to be hoped that no notice will be taken of them.

I have little to report about the "kupapa" (friendly Natives). Their condition does not alter. Ngatihaua continue to sell land, and a few among them do not squander the proceeds; but most of the tribes or hapus on the Lower Waikato and Lower Waipa are very poor, and I am afraid that all are very indolent. A number of those from Te Kohekohe, Rangiriri, and Taupiri have, by invitation of Manuhiri, established themselves near the Kopua. Whether it is a temporary movement or not remains to be seen, but it is evident from the events of the past year or two that centralization is one of Tawhiao's schemes. He seldom lives at Kuiti now, and the population about Hikurangi and Kopua, where he spends most of his time, has trebled since the end of 1875. It is understood that next summer he will invite His Excellency the Governor to meet him.

Very general regret was expressed at the death of the late Native Minister—Sir Donald McLean. He was personally known to nearly every Native in Waikato, and highly esteemed by them. I believe that they really mourned his loss.

Upon a review of the history of the past twelve months, I think that it will be admitted that a better spirit is growing up among the Natives, so recently in open hostility; and that,