

conversation with much less reserve than was their wont. Even the stubborn Ngatimahuta of Kawhia South are wonderfully altered in this respect, and are now the most frequent visitors of all the Natives on that side to the Aotea storekeeper for trading purposes.

Maneha, Hone Kiwi, and other chiefs from that locality, are anxious to come to some understanding by which a restitution of stolen property may be made. They propose, upon my communicating with them as to any theft committed within our boundary by their party, to search for the thief; when found, to return the articles stolen, with the addition of a fine, through me to the owner.

In exchange for this they ask that I shall do the same for them when their property is stolen by any of their number and disposed of to Europeans, and, further, that I should not allow any of them to be sent to prison without first giving them notice, in order that they might make restitution.

I pointed out to them that our laws, which had been in existence from time immemorial, could not be altered like theirs, which were made to suit the occasion. Since Maneha and Kiwi made the above request to me I have seen Tawhiao and Te Ngakau. I made a point of asking them whether this subject was discussed at Hikurangi, at the late meeting. Te Ngakau replied, "Yes, these chiefs were told to confer with you on the subject." Tawhiao, though attentively listening to what we said, made no remark.

From subsequent inquiry, I find many Natives opposed to this plan, preferring to continue as they are. These allege that all the petty thefts that are committed about them are done by these very people. Perhaps such an arrangement might be found useful for a time, yet I cannot but feel that to relax the present lenient law would be more detrimental to them, as it would do away with the wholesome dread that some of them at present have of being imprisoned.

The above, being a similar request to that made by Rewi to the Hon. the Native Minister at Alexandra, shows that the subject has received some consideration at the hands of well-meaning influential chiefs of the so-called King party, and the desire to initiate some scheme by which their race need not suffer imprisonment proves that a residence in gaol is looked upon as a disgrace. I have heard Tawhiao, at Kawhia, more than once publicly denounce the thieving propensities of his people. On one of these occasions he said, "he did not desire any persons who committed thefts ever to return to him; he would much rather that the Europeans killed them instead of imprisoning them, as in the latter case they would return to him after undergoing their sentence."

Tawhiao still continues to visit Aotea and Kawhia. Last month he did so with the intention of making a trip in the schooner "Echo" to Gannet Island, an island some thirty miles outside of Kawhia: the ostensible object was to indulge in a few days' hapuku-fishing, but Natives who profess to know his views declare this to be a pretext to open the harbour to this vessel.

After waiting over a fortnight at Kawhia he was compelled to abandon his project, in consequence of having to proceed to the interior to meet the friendly Waikatos, who were on their way up to clear land at the junction of the rivers Puniu and Waipa for cultivation, and in consequence of some extraordinary stories which were circulated in the interior, and from there brought back to Kawhia, as to the object of the vessel's entrance to that harbour. Notwithstanding the above, the general opinion amongst the Natives is that, if the vessel had not been delayed at Manukau Heads for more than ten days, she would have gone there.

For the last three years, frequent overtures have been made by the Waikato King party to their friendly relatives to concentrate in the locality of Alexandra. The cry has been "Waikato to Waikato." No doubt the proposed cultivation of Waikato at the junction of the Puniu and Waipa is on account of this desire.

Manuhiri and the Waikatos for some years past residing at Te Kuiti, Ngatimaniapoto territory, have been compelled to withdraw from there to the land between Pekaui and Hikurangi, in consequence no doubt of the demeanour of Rewi and his tribe generally. It is a well-known fact that Rewi never loses an opportunity of showing Waikato his determination to act on his own responsibility within his own territory.

Since the two satisfactory meetings which took place between Rewi and the Hon. the Native Minister at Alexandra, the adherents of Tawhiao have spoken of Rewi and tribe as though they were Europeans. These two interviews cannot have failed to have shown the Waikato King party that they need not expect any assistance or countenance from Rewi or his people when committing evil deeds, such as they have done in the past.

This amalgamation is against Rewi, in order that he may see, as against him, Tawhiao would find all Waikato with him. The breach between the two tribes has been gradually widening for several years, until at last it has assumed its present aspect.

Crops.

This season's crops about Raglan are equal to last. The Natives will have more than they will require. I regret to say only small quantities of grain are produced, which is invariably sold as soon as fit for market.

The Kawhia and Aotea people are more industrious; their crops always are much larger. The Kawhia potato crop is exceedingly good.

This winter, the wheat grown last season will all be planted, these people very wisely having agreed not to sell any, but to keep the whole for seed. It is said Tawhiao himself will