

most quiet and orderly people. Some boundary disputes between hapus are going on there, arising, principally, through the country having been lately taken up and stocked by Europeans; but, as the Natives are gradually having their lands surveyed and passed through the Court, these questions will in time cease.

In regard to the physical, moral, social, and political state of the Maoris I have but little to state. The Maori population numbers about the same as last year; if anything, somewhat less. No particular epidemic or disease has occurred. As to their moral and social condition I do not think there is much change. Some movement towards teetotalism and forming lodges, and some excitement showing a revival in relation to religious matters, have taken place along the coast, which, it is to be hoped, is a sign of improvement, for it has been remarked, "The religion of mankind is the effect of improvement, and not the cause of it." In regard to their political condition they are taking much more interest in the elections going on around them, and as to what takes place at Wellington, than formerly; and discuss questions affecting themselves closely, and in these discussions generally evince a great dislike to Road Board and all other rates, and taxation in general. In this, perhaps, they show a feeling which actuates others besides themselves; but, in regard to many of their political expressions, it may be said, as I remarked in regard to the education of their children, too much progress must not be expected in one generation. It takes a lengthened period to raise the natural standard of a whole people.

The Under Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

I have, &c.,
S. LOCKE.

No. 14.

Major BROWN, C.C., New Plymouth, to the UNDER SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

New Plymouth, 31st May, 1877.

I have the honor to make the following report on the most material questions affecting the present state of the district of which I am the Civil Commissioner:—

The Natives are gradually but steadily improving in their feeling of submission to the state of things resulting from their defeat by us: so much so, that they have accepted the carrying out of the confiscation of the balance of the land between the Patea and Waingongoro rivers without any serious demur. The Ngaraurus also show signs of meeting the Government halfway on the confiscation question in their district. I propose, after I have finished south of the Waingongoro, to cross that river and settle the question of the Waimate Plains. One of the principal difficulties arises from the philanthropic advisers of the Natives, who sometimes profess, as Dr. Curl did to Captain Wilson, to be working, as amateurs, in the interest of the colony, while others have the interest of one race or the other in view; but in no case their own. Their views are very various, and have the effect of raising feelings of distrust and uncertainty in the Native mind. In no case is the view of the Legislature advanced—i.e., that the land within the confiscated boundary belongs to the colony, and that it rests with the Government to return what it pleases of the land to its former owners. The enclosed copy and translation of a letter from Colonel McDonnell, licensed interpreter, is an instance of the sort of advice given to the Natives. As will be seen, it is diametrically opposed to the view that the land is in the hands of the Government. Instead of advising them (if advice is necessary) that they had better obtain the best terms they can from the Government, his advice is to let the Government have some of the land, and let him have the management of the rest. As all these advisers of the Natives are either themselves licensed interpreters, or employ interpreters as their agents, under some mistaken idea that the confiscation has left some Native claims in the land that can be dealt with under the Native Land Acts, I recommend that licensed interpreters be informed that by so doing they are exceeding their licenses, which will be cancelled if they attempt any further action of the kind without the special consent of the Government. Objections have been raised to the control that I have attempted to exercise over licensed interpreters in reference to conveyances and leases from Natives of confiscated lands that have been set apart for their use, but which are still in an undefined state as regards the interests comprised in them. In Native lands over which the Native title has not been extinguished by the confiscation, the Legislature has provided by enactment, in the Native Land Acts, for the definition and protection of the rights and interests comprised therein of the Natives who propose to deal with them by sale or lease. But where the Native title has been extinguished by the confiscation, no such protection exists, and the Native Land Court has refused to deal with such interests when they have been brought before it. Nor does the license given to Native interpreters confer any authority to the holder to interpret in cases of confiscated lands, except where, by the action of the Government, they can be dealt with by the Native Land Court. Under these circumstances, I have thought it advisable to assume the protection of the interests of the Natives, and, where it has appeared to me necessary, to forbid paid officers of the Government, who were licensed interpreters, from acting, where the question was still in a complicated state.

Difficulties have arisen through the leasing by Europeans of reserves of confiscated lands set apart for the Natives. In nearly all cases the rights of those have been recognized who formerly owned them. The Native, therefore, whose land has been given away or sold to military settlers or others, is left out in the cold. This has developed two classes of opponents to the further