

carrying out of the confiscation. The one who has let his reserve to an European feels sure that the European will be as a buffer between him and the Government, and doubts if he will get any more if the confiscation be further carried out; while the other feels so dissatisfied with his position that if he has any further interests he does not see the force of their being compromised by the confiscation being carried out on the land that is left. Tapa te Waero is a type of the former class. He has accepted and leased all the reserves he had a former interest in; he has opposed the confiscation being carried any further; he has petitioned the House for more land, which he appears to be entitled to; but he is not as yet willing that the confiscation should be carried any further than may be necessary to enable him to have the additional land he has petitioned for. Since Tapa te Waero and his relatives were obliged to go off from Mr. Dickie's land, after having expended some labour there, and Mere Awatea and others had to give up troubling Mr. Nicholson in the occupation of the land he had purchased from her and Erueti te Pawa, there has not been any attempt on the part of the Natives to take the law into their own hands. In one case a settler had destroyed an eel weir that was in existence before he acquired the adjoining property, and the nets at the openings of the weir went with it. As no mention was made of the weir in his Crown grant, I presume he is legally right. The Natives patiently heard me when I told them I feared they had no redress. It appears to be one of those hard cases in which an European likes to exercise the power that he holds. It is no doubt true that if our positions were reversed we should receive but a fraction of the consideration that we extend to them. Still, it would be well if some few of the settlers would refrain from taking a leaf out of Native habits and customs in their dealings with them. The Natives within the confiscated lands are evincing daily more submission to our Courts of law, and are even availing themselves of our Courts in criminal cases, several Natives having been sentenced to various terms of imprisonment with hard labour, or fined, for theft or assault on other Natives—in all cases with the consent of the tribe. But I am not aware of Natives having recourse to our Courts in cases of debt amongst themselves. The system of credit that obtains in the colony, and the remedies afforded for the recovery of debt, or imprisonment for non-payment, through the Resident Magistrates' Courts, have a very demoralizing effect. The trader looks to the law to enable him to recover the value of the goods he indiscriminately trusts the Natives with. The Native, on the other hand, endeavours to get as much credit as he can, and trusts to the chapter of accidents to enable him to pay, or to evade the payment of what he owes.

If Natives were viewed as being still minors in pecuniary matters, and all legal remedy against them for debt abolished, there is no doubt but that they would become more provident, and that their standard of honesty and principle would be raised when they found it had a marketable value. This is hardly the case now. The Natives are showing a disposition to part with the land immediately outside of the confiscated land. This will consolidate the blocks of land acquired by my predecessor, and facilitate the continuous survey and settlement of the district inland of Mount Egmont.

There is a good deal of disease among the Natives, due to their altered habits since the war. They formerly lived principally on the coast at or near their fishing stations; and fish formed an important portion of their diet. They have now been driven inland, and, even where fishing stations have been secured for them, they are comparatively useless, their canoes having been destroyed. I therefore recommend that arrangements be made to extend to them the same medical attendance afforded to the Natives at Wanganui, Wellington, Wairarapa, and other places. As regards the river fishing, Captain Blake informs me that the passage in Enclosure No. 3 of C. 4A., in the Appendix to the Journals of the House of Representatives for 1873, referring to eel cuts, refers to all rivers—that the Maomahaki was simply an illustration. I therefore recommend that no further Crown grants be issued having river boundaries on the Patea, Whenuakura, or Waitotara, until I have had time to ascertain if the site of an eel weir requires protection.

I have informed Taurua that for the future, in the Patea River, one of the openings in each weir must be left six feet wide, to allow of the passage of boats: to this he has agreed.

I have to express my indebtedness to the chiefs Hone Pihama and Taurua for their able assistance and advice on many occasions. The latter felt very keenly his having been taken prisoner to Otago, and the reproach made to him at Wanganui by Mete Kingi, "that his (Taurua's) opinion was now of no value, as he was only a slave." His appointment as an Assessor has been greatly appreciated by him, as a recognition by the Government that his rank and influence have not been seriously impaired by his deportation to Dunedin, which he speaks of as "the darkest day in his life," while the day he went on board the steamship "Luna" to return was "the brightest day of his existence."

The Native police force was considerably reduced last year, as Captain Wilson, who is in charge of it, considered that it could be done without impairing its efficiency. I cannot as yet recommend any further reduction, as it has been useful in preventing theft, and recovering stolen property, even on the Waimate side of the Waingongoro River.

The Under Secretary, Native Department,  
Wellington.

I have, &c.,  
CHARLES BROWN,  
Civil Commissioner.