

I trust the Natives are now manifesting a real interest in the education of their children. There are nine village schools established in this district, in which 270 children are receiving instruction; and although in some instances there have been occasional fallings off in the attendance, caused by the parents demanding their assistance in planting and taking up their crops, and sometimes even on the gum fields, yet these schools are doing good work and making satisfactory progress, and the effect upon the Natives generally cannot but be productive of good.

Drunkenness I believe to be on the decline; many see the evil of it, and there are leading men amongst them who are exerting their influence to check this evil. I am of opinion that, if the restrictive laws with reference to the sale of spirits to Natives were repealed, the results would be favourable; but so long as a Maori sees a line of distinction drawn between himself and his European neighbour, forbidding him that which is already within his reach, so long will he be determined to have it, and sly grog-selling will be the result, in spite of all legislation.

Two cases of land disputes, which at one time threatened a disturbance of the peace, have been settled by arbitration. This mode of settling disputes is gaining favour. At the hearing of the first case it was arranged that on all future occasions the expenses incurred should be defrayed by the disputants. This arrangement was strictly carried out in the second case, food in abundance being provided by both parties, and one guinea per day paid to the arbitrators.

Two other cases of a similar nature, still pending, have occasioned me some trouble in negotiating between the parties; and having referred them to the Native Land Court, as the proper tribunal for settling these disputes, the question has been repeatedly asked when a sitting of the Court may next be expected, so long a time having elapsed since a Court was held in this district.

Sickness, as usual, has been prevalent, and several deaths have occurred, three of the Ngapuhi chiefs being included in the number. Hohaia Waikato, the chief who accompanied Hongi on a visit to England, died during the month of September last, and was buried in Russell Churchyard. Hori te Pakiri, a cousin of Waikato's, died on the 15th of last month, and was, at his own request, buried at Kerikeri. Both these chiefs, who died in extreme old age, maintained a constant friendship towards the Europeans from the time that an Englishman first set foot on these shores, and equally so towards the Government since the first establishment of the colony.

Tango Hikuwai, son of Whakarua, who for five-and-twenty years acted as one of the Assessors of this district, died in the month of February last, and was buried in Ohaeawae Churchyard.

Courts have been regularly held at Waimate, Russell, Kawakawa, and Whangaroa. Civil cases have proved numerous, but there has been very little crime, and in the cases brought forward the Natives have behaved exceedingly well.

Two instances may be mentioned of culprits being apprehended by Native constables, and, after conviction, escorted by them to Russell Gaol, no one attempting to interfere, although in both cases the prisoners were well connected, and many of their friends were present. I do not quote these cases from any ostentatious motives, nor would I aver that every case which may occur in a Native district will so quietly be brought to the same successful issue, but I do say that the establishment of British law amongst these Natives is being steadily advanced, and, if carefully administered, the time may not be far distant when one and all will acknowledge themselves subject to its sway. But caution is still necessary in dealing with an impulsive and excitable people, to whom our laws are strange, and who, though willing to be led, will never submit to be driven; and any hasty or rash proceeding might result in serious difficulties.

In conclusion, I have much pleasure in notifying that the district at the present time is in a quiet and orderly state, the conduct of the Natives good, and the general feeling in favour of civilization and British rule.

The Under Secretary, Native Department,
Wellington.

I have, &c.,
EDWARD M. WILLIAMS,
Resident Magistrate.

No. 5.

Mr. J. J. SYMONDS, R.M., Kaipara, to the UNDER SECRETARY, Native Department.
Resident Magistrate's Office, Helensville, Kaipara,
16th May, 1878.

SIR,—

In accordance with the request contained in your Circular No. 11, of the 25th April, 1878, I have the honor to enclose a report upon the state of the Natives in my district, for the information of the Hon. the Native Minister.

The Under Secretary, Native Department,
Wellington.

I have, &c.,
JOHN JERMYN SYMONDS,
Resident Magistrate.