

1879.

with special functions, in the belief that they were capable of influencing the minds of the Natives favourably towards the Government. In several instances the character and habits of life of these persons have been such as ought to have disqualified them altogether from Government employment in any department, but at any rate especially disqualified them from appearing as representatives or servants of the Ministry among a people who would be only too apt to judge of the character of the Government by that of the tools it used. The very position of these persons, and the relation in which they stood towards the Natives and the Government respectively, implied that they should do the work of spies, and indicated the probability that they would prove treacherous to either party whenever their own interests could be advanced by such a course. It was only, indeed, as spies that they could work at all; and, although the Government did no doubt occasionally obtain from them information that was correct, yet, coming from that source, it never could be relied upon. Major Brown, when asked by us whether the employment of the class alluded to was really of any value, was obliged to admit that as a general rule it was not, though he specified one instance in which timely information derived from such a source had been attended with advantage to the public interest; but even in that case we saw no reason why the information could not have been obtained in another way. We very strongly urge that the sooner the Government ceases to avail itself of such services the more it will obtain the respect of the Natives, and success in its dealings with them. An idea seems to have prevailed that the class of persons we allude to are a necessary evil, and that if their influence were not secured for the Government it would be exercised against it. The answer is that their influence has never done anything for us, but constantly done much against us; and that whatever influence they have had was due to the money paid them for their services. Let this condition cease, and the influence of the class will be as powerless for injury as we believe it to be for good. In the case of a chief like Te Whiti, who has so often shown a strong moral sense (rightly or wrongly directed is not the question), and who has ever laboured to elevate the character of his people and to restrain them from the vices so fatal to a savage race, the spectacle of a Government allied with spies and seeking to profit by their intrigues, cannot but degrade us in his estimation and justify his aversion from our rule.

Nor, while speaking on this subject, can any one who thinks upon the effect of that rule upon a generous race, shut his eyes to the ruin that is fast coming upon them by that fatal indulgence in drink from which no Government deems it any duty to try and save them. We ask Your Excellency to read a letter from Major Brown, written nearly three years ago, on 20th August 1877, in which he places before the Government very plainly and forcibly the duty which he conceives to be incumbent upon it to prevent, if possible, the establishment of publichouses in the districts between Waingongoro and Stoney River. It is certain that one of the motives which have made Te Whiti averse from the settlement of Europeans in the Parihaka country, has been the dread of seeing his people demoralized by the publichouse. In his addresses at the Parihaka meetings he has frequently lamented the mischief that has ensued among his people from the drink which they can get in the European settlements; and according to Major Brown, he has been successful in doing what neither the wisdom of the Colonial Parliament nor the vigilance of the Executive Government have done elsewhere, he has prevented the sale (and to a great extent the use) of intoxicating liquors within his own particular district. Whether any general Licensing Act could effect the object aimed at in a community composed jointly of Maoris and Europeans may well be doubted: judging by the very limited extent to which the Act of 1878 gives any power to residents in districts chiefly occupied by Maoris, it may be safely asserted that it would not. The only course which holds out any prospect of successfully grappling with the persistent efforts to push the trade even into the remotest fastnesses of the interior where none but Maori population exists, is the absolute prohibition within such districts of the sale of intoxicating drinks. In districts in which no pretence of vested interests can be pleaded, the Government would be fully justified in establishing such prohibition by law. And it is probable that

Letter from
Major Brown on
the traffic in
spirits, 20th
August 1877.
Appendix E,
No. 4.