

good deal of trouble with obstructionists, who at length proceeded to extremities, driving off a working-party and taking away their tools. The police, however, were able to get up a good case: the instigator, an old Hauhau chief, was heavily fined, four of his followers were also fined, and there has not been the slightest attempt at obstruction since.

The crops this year have been abundant and good, and in the northern part of the district more grain has been grown than for many years past.

There has also been less mortality than for years past (as I am informed by the local officers and persons long resident in the district). This is, no doubt, owing to the fact that there has been very little drunkenness, and that they are becoming more cleanly in their habits. At most, if not all, of the villages may now be seen comfortable weatherboard cottages with windows and chimney, and the *wharepuni*, which used to be the common sleeping-room, is now only used for meetings or to lodge strangers in. At most of the villages also they have now erected very neat churches, which seem to be well attended.

They seem at last to have become alive to the advantages of obtaining a sound English education for their children. Most earnest applications for schools have been sent in to the Education Department from various parts of the district, and the applicants are willing in all cases to convey the necessary school sites to Government under the provisions of the School Sites Act. I visited recently the schools at Waioamatatini and Akuaku. At the former school every pupil was present; the reason for this being that the School Committee, of which Major Ropata is Chairman, have made a regulation by which the parents of absentee children—except in cases of sickness—are fined 10s. for the first absence, £1 for the second, and so on: the result is that at the Waioamatatini School there are no absentees. At Akuaku they have not adopted the same regulation, and the attendance is consequently rather irregular. Two schools have been closed during the last quarter at Tokomaru and Tologa Bay; the Natives are praying to have them reopened.

During the past year I have held Courts three times at Awanui and six times at Tologa, besides the regular Court at Gisborne. I am not able to furnish a perfectly correct return of all cases heard, as the Tologa Bay return is not complete for the year. I send in an approximate return showing criminal and civil cases, in which Maoris were concerned, over the whole of my district:—Criminal: Persons apprehended, 131; discharged for want of evidence, 23; dismissed on the merits, 18; summary convictions, 71; fined, 44. Civil: Europeans against Maoris, 127 cases, aggregate amount sued for £1,745 8s. 2d., aggregate amount recovered £1,321 0s. 7d.; Maoris against Europeans, sixteen cases, aggregate amount sued for £125 15s. 6d., aggregate amount recovered £27 19s.; Maoris only concerned, forty cases, aggregate amount sued for £323 2s. 6d., aggregate amount recovered £129 19s.

I have, &c.,

JAMES BOOTH, R.M.,

The Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

Native Agent.

No. 10.

Captain PREECE, R.M., Napier, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Resident Magistrate's Office, Napier, 27th May, 1884.

In accordance with the instructions contained in your circular of the 9th ultimo, No. 3, I have the honour to forward the following report on the state of the Natives in the districts under my charge:—

Napier District.

There is very little change to report in the condition of the Natives in this district during the last year. Several blocks of land, which have been in dispute between the various hapus, have passed through the Native Land Court, which has held frequent sittings in the district within the past twelve months. There seems to be a growing desire amongst the Natives to subdivide their claims in blocks which have in some instances been passed through the Court many years ago, and in which the original grantees, on their representation, have, up to this time, shared the profits and rents equally. These subdivisions have not yet taken the shape of individualizing the titles, but merely dividing the blocks between the contending hapus. They have now, however, ascertained that shares are divided according to the relative interests of the parties, under Native custom. I, therefore, anticipate that there will be a great number of applications of a similar nature before the next Court.

The long-standing Otamakapua case having been settled, a large portion of the purchase-money was paid to the Natives of this district, and I am pleased to say that they have not spent it in their usual extravagant manner, but are keeping it and only spending it for their actual wants. Probably the general depression at present existing in the colony has made them realize the value of money, owing to their being unable to get it so readily as in former years.

A young chief from Porangahau and Waipawa, named Hori Ropiha, left here for Auckland on a visit about two months ago, and while there was induced to accompany the chief Tawhiaio to England. He is a very intelligent man, and I think his influence and example will have a good effect on the uncivilized Waikato chief.