

Native Schools.

There are no Government schools in this district. A number of Native boys from this and other districts attend Te Aute College. Native and half-caste girls also attend the Convent School and the Misses Williams's Native Girls' School.

Wairoa District.

The Natives in this district are well behaved. I am pleased to say that there is very little drunkenness amongst them. Formerly they were very much given to drink, and squandered large sums of money in the purchase thereof.

A very large number of claims are waiting to be adjudicated on by the Native Land Court, a sitting of which has not taken place in the district for over two years. The Natives complain that their interests have been overlooked, while Courts have been appointed to sit in other places to hear single cases where very few individuals have been interested.

General Remarks.

The total number of cases heard in the Resident Magistrates' Courts at Napier, Waipawa, Ormondville, and Wairoa, in which Maoris were concerned, were as follow: Civil cases in which Europeans were plaintiffs and Maoris defendants, 85; in which Maoris were plaintiffs and Europeans defendants, 5; in which Maoris alone were concerned, 23. The total number of summary and criminal charges brought against Natives in said Courts were—summarily convicted, 63; dismissed, 16; committed for trial, 1. These were principally minor offences, the case committed for trial being one of perjury.

I have, &c.,

GEORGE A. PREECE, R.M.

The Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

No. 11.

ROBERT WARD, Esq., R.M., Whanganui, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Resident Magistrate's Office, Whanganui, 14th April, 1884.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Circular Letter No. 3, dated the 9th instant, and in compliance therewith send you my annual report on the state of the Natives in my district.

I am very glad to be able to say that there is a marked improvement in their religious condition, induced, I am inclined to think, by the devoted labours of the Rev. Mr. Grace, of Putiki, the late ever-to-be-respected Rev. Father Moreau, the Catholic Mission Station at Iruharama (Jerusalem), the Rev. Mr. McWilliam, of Otaki, the Rev. A. Honore, of Foxton, and numerous Native catechists throughout the district.

The death, at an advanced age, of the Rev. Father Moreau is a loss much felt by the Maori missionary cause. He was most devoted to his Church and people, and at the same time so liberal-minded and large-hearted as to win the affectionate regard of persons of all shades of religious opinions that were brought in contact with him. I heard of his death with feelings of deep sorrow and regret. *Requiescat in pace.*

The death of the Whanganui Native chief, Mete Kingi Paetahi, which occurred at Putiki in September last, was to many persons a painful surprise. Both Europeans and Maoris joined in mourning the loss of one who, years ago, when Whanganui wanted help and protection, was true to his word, and nobly did his best in giving his powerful help to the few struggling settlers living here. He was ever our true friend in time of trouble. At his death the Hon. the Native Minister extended to him the fitting honour of a field-officer's military funeral, and, with equal good grace, personally attended, with a host of our settlers and townsmen, the funeral of the old chief, thus showing honour to whom honour was due.

I am glad to be able to report favourably on the success of the Blue-Ribbon movement among the Natives: its spread is truly wonderful. Some little while ago many Natives who brought their wool down the river sold it, and, instead of spending a large portion of the proceeds in the publichouses, bought timber for the erection of a church, and at once took it back with them. Though some have backslided from their pledges, a very great majority have strictly adhered to their promises, and are true to their "bit o' blue." During the last year I have been called upon in only one instance to make a prohibition order, under "The Licensing Act, 1881," in regard to a Maori. That was a few days ago, in the case of a young Rangitane at Palmerston North.

I am pleased to be able to state that there is a very satisfactory feeling evinced towards each other by both Europeans and Maoris, and this feeling appears to be growing stronger every year. I rejoice to say that the Natives have shown a disposition to throw open for railway construction, and permitting prospectors to seek for gold in the Upper Whanganui, Murimotu, and Tuhua country.

The proposed visit of Tawhiao to England is viewed with pleasure by Natives generally. They say he will see what English towns are like, and come back to New Zealand all the better for the trip. So far as I can see, the Natives here do not regard Tawhiao in any other way, or as the object of any interest, except as the representative of the national Native party.