

SESS. II.—1884.
NEW ZEALAND.

REPORTS FROM OFFICERS IN NATIVE DISTRICTS.

[In Continuation of G.—1A, 1883.]

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

No. 1.

The UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department, to OFFICERS in NATIVE DISTRICTS.
(Circular No. 3.)

SIR,—

Native Office, Wellington, 9th April, 1884.

I have the honour, by direction of Mr. Bryce, to request that you will be good enough to forward at your earliest convenience, but not later than the 14th proximo, the usual annual report upon the state of the Natives in your district, for presentation to Parliament.

I have, &c.,

T. W. LEWIS,

Under-Secretary.

No. 2.

H. W. BISHOP, Esq., R.M., Mangonui, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Resident Magistrate's Office, Mangonui, 12th May, 1884.

In compliance with the request conveyed in your Circular Letter No. 3, of the 9th ultimo, I have the honour to report upon the state of the Natives in my district, as follows:—

The health of the people during the past year has been almost unprecedentedly bad. There is scarcely a settlement in the district that has not been visited by an epidemic in the form of fever of a virulent type, and very numerous deaths have occurred. The sickness has been almost entirely confined to the young people, ranging in age from about eighteen years downwards. Some doubt would appear to exist as to what fever this really is, but many of the symptoms are undoubtedly those of typhoid. It is highly infectious as regards the children, but adults do not appear to be affected by it to nearly the same extent. A peculiarity too lies in the fact that children of European parentage mingle with impunity with the infected Natives, but entirely escape the contagion. The settlements mostly affected have been Peria, Pukepoto, Te Kao, Parapara, Ahipara, and Herekino, and the mortality has been greatest at the three last-mentioned places.

The Native Medical Officer, Dr. Trimnell, has had seventy-five cases of fever under his charge. Of these, eleven have succumbed to the disease. The teachers of the various Native schools throughout the district have done their best to treat, medicinally and otherwise, the many patients brought under their notice, and they have done good service in this respect. The most successful among them has been Mr. Masters, of Pukepoto. Out of some thirty cases treated by him not one had a fatal termination. I regret, however, to say that after the lapse of about two months the fever has reappeared in the neighbourhood of Pukepoto within the last few days, and already two deaths have occurred. Liberal supplies of drugs have been granted by the Native Office to several of the teachers, and in many instances these have been put to good service.

The causes of this sad state of things are not far to seek. They have been stated again and again, and it is not necessary to recapitulate them here. The Natives themselves are perfectly well aware of them. They may be summed up thus: The choice of low-lying, unhealthy, and damp situations as the sites for kaingas, and an utter and persistent disregard of the most ordinary sanitary precautions. It is quite hopeless to induce a better state of things by persuasion and reasoning. Legislation alone, and that strictly carried out, will alter the existing state of things. There are, I know, many and great difficulties in the way of this: whether they are insuperable is a matter of opinion. At meetings of Natives at various times I have generally, when present, taken the opportunity to say something on the subject of sanitary laws,

at the same time pointing out what I considered to be the main causes of the spread of a fell disease which appeared to confine itself entirely to people of the Native race. I have generally met with a sort of apathetic acquiescence and agreement with my views and suggestions, and sometimes with a few promises of improvement; but the result cannot be described as anything but discouraging. It would be almost necessary to change the entire nature of a Maori to effect any voluntary improvement in his social and domestic habits. His present style of life is part and parcel of his nature, and it cannot but be apparent to any person brought even into casual contact with him that the effect is highly demoralizing. Men, women, and children crowd into a small whare where two or three may be lying sick, almost unto death, of the fever; and there they remain for hours, talking, eating, smoking, and sleeping, in an atmosphere that no ordinary mortal could breathe in. When a death occurs it is the same thing over again. The corpse, reeking with contagion, is surrounded by lamenting relatives and friends, who oftentimes will embrace the body in a transport of grief. This continues for hours, and the same thing occurs constantly. What can one hope to do with people who are so foolish as to persist in a course which can only be described as suicidal in the extreme? This is no overdrawn picture, but a simple statement of what has come under my own observation. The majority of the whares have no ventilation at all, and not the slightest attempt is made to purify the atmosphere. When a patient is very feverish and restless he will be sometimes carried outside and laid down in a cool spot, but without regard to draught or damp. I have known too of instances where a patient raging with fever has been carried by his friends and placed in a cold running stream of water, according to the advice of some ignorant *tohunga*. The result may be imagined. When remonstrated with on the subject, the reply would generally be something based on a superstitious idea.

There is no difficulty in inducing the Natives to take the various medicines prescribed for them, but it is quite hopeless to expect them to carry out the instructions which may accompany the doses. Then again, with regard to diet, it is always either a famine or a feast, and, though instructions are constantly given as to the most suitable kinds of food for invalids, they seem to attach very little importance to this subject. In many cases, in the first stage of convalescence, when the patient is extremely weak and low, and requires all possible nourishment, the only food given is often the most unsuitable. Bad food and scanty clothing are fruitful sources of disease amongst the children.

Considerable notice has been attracted of late to the prevailing epidemic amongst the Maoris, by articles and letters which have appeared from time to time in the public Press. The state of things is bad enough, but not nearly so dreadful as some people would wish to represent it to be. Excellent leading articles have appeared on the subject in the *New Zealand Herald*, and even the Natives have had their notice drawn to them. On one occasion lately I saw a Native lad, able to read English, translating portions of an article on the epidemic in the *New Zealand Herald* to some other Natives, and they appeared to be greatly interested. All reasonable efforts have been made to mitigate the evils arising from the fever, and to check its spread; and, though these may have failed to a great extent, it appears to me unreasonable to say, without due knowledge of the facts, that the welfare of the Maoris as a people is being neglected.

The poverty of the Natives in this district is very apparent at the present time. Kauri gum is getting somewhat scarce in the immediate neighbourhood of the settlements, and to procure it in payable quantities the diggers have to go farther afield. Prices have been ruling somewhat low compared with those of late years, and the Natives have not the same inducement to dig. Work in the kauri bushes and elsewhere has been plentiful, and the wages high, but Maoris are not suited for constant labour. They are fond of change and novelty, and cannot be induced to remain long at any settled employment. Those of them who form the exception to the rule are doing well; they live in comfortable weatherboard houses, and have all the appearance of thoroughly enjoying the many advantages of civilization.

Whaling was carried on with great spirit during the season, but very indifferent success was met with. Only one whale was captured, and the yield of oil was comparatively small. There are now eight boats on the coast, fully equipped, and entirely owned by Natives. The industry does not in any way prove a profitable undertaking to those interested, but there is a tinge of excitement about it which makes it very attractive to the Maoris.

Many meetings, political and other, have been held during the past year in various parts of the northern district, and the consequent waste of food and time has been considerable. To provide a great display at these meetings the Natives unhesitatingly impoverish and starve themselves for months afterwards, and it is lamentable to see those whose families are destitute of the common necessities of life making large presents in money and goods to a lot of people, the majority of whom attend these meetings with no other objects than to feed heartily and to carry away all they can get.

A large meeting was lately held at the Bay of Islands in connection with the Treaty of Waitangi. Large numbers of Natives attended from all parts of this district, and various questions were discussed affecting the Native race. A most unhealthy agitation is being kept alive amongst them by those who have personal ends to gain, and, though time will serve to put things in their proper light, in the meantime a feeling of unrest and dissatisfaction pervades the Maori mind. In connection with this Treaty of Waitangi a committee has been appointed endowed by general consent with large judicial powers, and members travel round the northern

districts, adjudicating in cases of every description. Some decisions of a most extraordinary character have been told to me, but the Natives appear to invariably manage to ultimately settle the disputes by mutual consent, and they loyally uphold and carry out the *dicta* of these curiously-composed tribunals. Heavy fees are charged, but I am unable to say what is the ultimate disposal of these. The notion is entirely confined to the Ngapuhis. The Rarawas fight very shy of these new-fangled ideas, and prefer to carry themselves and their troubles into the clearer atmosphere of the Resident Magistrates' Courts.

The first election under "The Native Committees Act, 1883," has been recently held in this district. Very little general interest was taken in the result. As yet the matter is but little understood, and the Rarawas appear suspicious lest the Committee should abuse their power, while the Ngapuhis do not like the idea of their self-constituted tribunals being overshadowed by a body endowed by law with certain judicial powers. It is of course premature at the present time to express an opinion as to the ultimate results of the working of the Act.

One very satisfactory feature to be noted in connection with the Maoris in the North is their increased sobriety. I mentioned this fact in my last report, and I am glad indeed to say that the improvement noted then bids fair to become lasting. On every occasion of a gathering of Natives, one can see two out of every three wearing the blue ribbon. In several cases Natives who used by their rowdy and drunken conduct to be a pest to the place have become, by temperance agencies, quite respectable members of society.

The district has been free from crime of a serious nature, and, though a large number of cases against Natives have been heard in the Court during the past year, they have mostly been for minor offences.

The Dog Registration Act is still a sore point with the Natives. They resist it by every means in their power. On one occasion the collection of a penalty under the Act nearly led to a serious breach of the peace, and, had it not been for firm and effective measures taken, the law would have been openly defied. As it was, six Natives who misbehaved themselves and resisted the police were brought to Court and heavily fined, and, the amounts being paid, the matter ended. One hundred and twenty-six Natives purchased collars last year, principally of the Rarawa Tribe; but the collection entailed more trouble than it was worth. The dislike to this particular tax is very deep and widespread, and its collection at any time will be liable to be met with forcible resistance. The County Council, this year, has so far taken no steps to enforce the Act, and, I think, wisely. Looking to the fact that, while last year the tax was very vigorously enforced here, in the adjoining Counties of Hokianga and Bay of Islands the Act was allowed to remain in abeyance, it appears to me to be an injustice to make these Natives pay while their more fortunate brethren, just across the boundary, escape free.

The only other matter of importance forming a subject of dispute with the Natives has been the passage of a portion of the Victoria-Okaihau Road through the Mangataeore Block. The surveyor, Mr. Garsed, employed in carrying out the work, was turned off the land and prevented from cutting the lines. The leading obstructionist was summoned to the Court, and was fined £10 and costs. The fine has been paid, but as Mr. Garsed has not yet returned to the work I am unable to say whether the example made has had a salutary effect. The Natives appear very obstinate and determined to prevent the making of the road in this particular place.

Surprisingly little land is now cultivated by the residents at the different settlements. No crops of any consequence are now raised, and during a portion of the year the people depend entirely upon supplies procured from the stores, to be paid for by the proceeds of the sale of gum. Whereas formerly large areas could be seen planted with potatoes, kumaras, taros, corn, &c., now small patches dotted about here and there form the sole visible proof of industry. The kaingas consequently have an almost deserted appearance.

The Native schools are still in full operation, but the late prevalence of sickness has militated greatly against their success. I am hoping that in a short time matters will improve. No pains are being spared to place all the schools on the most efficient footing possible.

I am, &c.,

H. W. BISHOP,

The Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

Resident Magistrate.

No. 3.

S. VON STÜRMER, Esq., R.M., Hokianga, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Resident Magistrate's Office, Hokianga, 29th April, 1884.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Circular Letter No. 3, of the 9th April, 1884, requesting me to forward my usual annual report upon the state of the Natives in this district, for presentation to Parliament, and now beg to forward the report herewith.

It is very gratifying to me that I am still able, as last year, to report favourably on the state of the large Native population in my district. Year by year they are improving their knowledge of our language and customs, and gradually and surely becoming more alive to the advantages to be gained by a closer and more intimate communication with their pakeha neighbours, and, though the change for the better is not so visible to one residing amongst them, when we come to look back for a few years we can then plainly see the rapid strides they have made towards

civilization. They have improved in their habits of thrift, though still too careless of the future, and are more careful than formerly of debt, and are more cleanly and tidy in their persons and dress. A great deal of this is undoubtedly due to examples set in the village schools in the various settlements, there being ten in this district.

With reference to the health of the people, chest troubles, as might be expected from the great amount of wet weather we have had this season, have been the principal cause of death during the year. At Waitapu, Whangape, and Herekino, several deaths have occurred from malarial or low fever, which also may in a great measure be traceable to the damp, warm season we have lately passed through; as well as to the sanitary condition of the several villages, which is very bad, they being as a rule established in low-lying rich valleys, with very little or no attention paid to drainage, or the disposal of the refuse matter from the houses. Medicines are provided for the Natives both at the schools and at the Township of Herd's Point, where a properly-qualified dispenser of drugs resides, who is subsidized by the Government, and they freely avail themselves of his services. In the case of Waitapu, on my receiving information in July last that fever was in the settlement and likely to spread, I caused the Native school there to be closed, and reported the circumstances to the Chairman of the County Council, who at once took steps to isolate the cases and procure proper attendance at the expense of the local body. And in March last, when I received notice from the Natives that the children attending the school at Whangape were suffering from an attack of influenza, accompanied by fever, I closed the school; and Mr. Bow, the teacher, who is well supplied with drugs, and is a gentleman of more than ordinary ability, at once gave the Natives every assistance in his power, though I am sorry to say that up to this date I have word that one of the school children has died, and others are still suffering from the effects of the epidemic. In my report of the 10th instant this matter is more fully dealt with. I am of opinion that the health of the Natives will not be materially improved, and that periodical attacks of malarial fever will reappear, until they can be taught (which will be most difficult in the case of the older people) the actual necessity and vital importance of a most decided change in their sanitary arrangements. Otherwise the health of the district has been moderately good.

The habits of the people may be said to be improving. Intemperance, so long the bane of the race, is fast losing its hold upon them, and it is now very seldom that a Native is to be seen in a state of intoxication. This is doubtless largely due to the improvement in this respect in the habits of the Europeans resident in the district, and also to the praiseworthy efforts of Mr. Kereama Tawhai and the resident missionary here, who have made a regular crusade through the North in the cause of the Blue-Ribbon movement and gained an immense number of converts, who up to the present have firmly adhered to their pledges; and I cannot speak too highly of the good that has ensued, and is likely to ensue, to the Native race therefrom.

During the past season a rather larger area of land has been cultivated and more food raised than during former years, and, as the people do not hold large meetings or *huis* as frequently as they did, there is not likely to be any scarcity during the coming winter. Many very large patches of tobacco have also been successfully harvested, and but a limited quantity of the imported article is used in the district. For the first time, grapes have assumed a commercial value in this district: this is owing to a party of German vinegrowers having commenced the manufacture of wine; and I am informed that one Native residing on the Mangamuka River disposed of a ton of grapes at 2d. per pound. No doubt in future seasons more attention will be paid to this industry. The gum fields still attract a large number of persons, and many Natives from the West Coast spend at least six months in every twelve in the Kaipara District following the occupation of gum-digging. A large proportion of the county works, road-making, &c., are contracted for by Natives, and carried out, as a rule, in a very creditable manner. The village schools, ten in number, are still well supported—in fact, since their establishment in this district, have been a most decided success.

No Native quarrels of consequence have occurred, nor has crime been on the increase during the past twelve months. A considerable amount of interest has been evinced by the Hokianga Natives in politics, and the elections for members under "The Native Committees Act, 1883," has caused some little excitement here, four of the members elected belonging to this district. In conclusion, I feel I may safely say that the general condition of the Natives in the Hokianga District is satisfactory, and that considerable improvements have been manifested amongst them of late.

I have, &c.,

SPENCER VON STÜRMER,

The Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

Resident Magistrate.

No. 4.

J. S. CLENDON, Esq., R.M., Whangarei, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Native Office, Whangarei, 5th May, 1884.

I have the honour, in accordance with the instructions contained in your Circular No. 3, of the 9th April last, to report, for the information of the Hon. the Native Minister, as follows:—

The Natives in the Kaipara District have employed themselves during the past year in gum-digging, cultivating their land, and some few in felling and squaring kauri timber for ship-

ment abroad. They have been unusually healthy, few deaths having occurred amongst them during the period. Their behaviour has been uniformly quiet and good, but one instance of crime having been committed and two cases of road obstruction, of the particulars of which the Government have already been informed. The schools have been fairly attended, and some progress made by the scholars; but the apathy and indifference of the parents generally in enforcing their children's regular attendance at school render the advancement of the scholars more uncertain, and at the same time cause far more anxiety and trouble to their teachers.

In the Whangarei District the Natives have employed themselves in their usual gum-digging and cultivating operations, and, with the exception of one case of road obstruction, their behaviour during the past year has been most orderly, no instances of crime having occurred amongst them. They have suffered slightly from typhoid fever, chiefly engendered from living in swampy and unhealthy localities whilst gum-digging in the winter. Several deaths have occurred from this cause in the Mangakahia portion of the district, and two near Whangarei—with exception of the latter, chiefly of children.

The Ngunguru School has been fairly attended, and the scholars are progressing favourably.

In the portion of the Bay of Islands District under my charge the Natives have, during the past year, behaved exceedingly well, only two instances of crime having taken place. They have employed themselves in gum-digging, cultivation, and pastoral pursuits. Their health has been exceptionally good, few instances of sickness having occurred. The schools have been fairly attended; but, for the reasons above stated, a proportionate advancement in the pupils has not taken place.

I feel much pleasure at being in a position to report so favourably of the large Native district under my supervision.

I have, &c.,

JAMES S. CLENDON,

The Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

Resident Magistrate.

No. 5.

G. T. WILKINSON, Esq., Alexandra, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Native Office, Alexandra, 14th May, 1884.

In accordance with instructions contained in your Circular No. 3, of the 9th ultimo, I have the honour to forward my annual report on the state of the Natives in my districts.

WAIKATO (INCLUDING KAWHIA, WAIPA, AND UPPER MOKAU).

I am glad to be able to report favourably upon the Natives in this district during the past year, both in a general and also in a particular sense. In a general sense, because, the district being such a large one, and the Natives in it so numerous, it would be only natural to expect that, whilst the thoughts and actions of some were of the best, those of others would be of the very opposite character. This, however, has not been the case, and, taking the district all through—viz., from Auckland to Mokau, and from Kawhia across to the boundaries of Rotorua and Taupo—I think I am justified in saying that the large number of Natives within those boundaries (consisting as they do of different tribes, having different politics and different religions) have, with one or two exceptions, conducted themselves in a most creditable manner during the past twelve months. In a particular sense, because the action of a certain section of them (the Ngatimaniapoto) with regard to the dealing with the land, coupled with the progressive policy of the Government during the past year, has been of such a nature as to bring out any real bad feeling and desire to obstruct, had it existed to any large extent within the breasts of the others, especially of those who are more or less supporters of Tawhiao, and who naturally dislike and look with suspicion upon anything that is likely to weaken his power and authority in this district. This, however, has only been the case in one or two instances, and those of a slight nature, the very slightness of which goes to show that, although Tawhiao and his people are opposed to us in the policy that is now being carried out, they are not prepared to go to any very great lengths with their opposition. There are, I think, two reasons for this action of theirs, one of which is fear of the result as regards themselves; but another is—and it is very creditable to them—that they are determined to bring about, if possible, the end they desire without breaking the law, stirring up strife, or coming into conflict with the Europeans. I think it will be readily admitted that this action is very creditable to them, especially when we consider that in so doing they are indirectly assisting us in bringing about a state of affairs that must eventually end in the breaking-up of their long-cherished “King movement” and claim for independent authority for Tawhiao as King over a territory which is not his by Native right, but which is owned by a people who, although once his supporters, will not now recognize or tolerate him. Knowing this, as they do, it shows that some strange influence or infatuation must be at work in their breasts to not only restrain them from breaking the law, but actually to induce them to look on with complaisance, and apparently submit with a good grace to what is certain to result in their political downfall.

Without going further into this matter at present, I will here remark that the Natives throughout this district have shown a considerable amount of industry during the past

year, for which they have been rewarded with an abundant crop of potatoes, which is their staple food. The maize crop, however, has been partly a failure, owing to the cold winds that prevailed when the plants were quite young, which had the effect of spoiling nearly the whole crop.

Social Position.

The social position of the Natives in this district has considerably improved during the past year. There has been very little drunkenness—indeed, so far as regards the Waikatos at Whatiwhatihoe and the Ngatimaniapoto, the absence of it has been quite marked. There have been only two cases of drunkenness tried at the Alexandra Courthouse during the past year, whilst at Te Awamutu there have been two for drunkenness, two for larceny, and one for malicious injury to property. When one considers the number of Natives that are continually frequenting these settlements (including Kihikihi, where there is no Court), it is, I think a matter for congratulation that there should be such an absence of drunkenness and crime.

There is one place, however, within my district the Natives of which are not so fully entitled to the above good character for temperance, and that is Kawhia. There is no doubt that on one or two occasions the Natives of that place have been able, either on their own application or through the assistance of some of the Armed Constabulary Force located there, to obtain liquor from the canteen, and cases of drunkenness and debauchery have been the result. But I am satisfied that instances of this sort have been the exception and not the rule during the past twelve months, and that when they have occurred it has been because the person in charge of the canteen has allowed the Natives to have liquor without the consent of, and unknown to, the officer in charge of the garrison. This evil could, I think, be met with by making more stringent rules regarding the supply of liquor to Natives at that place, and by instituting a more strict supervision in order to see that those rules are carried out.

The Natives (as a body) all through the district are very much against the introduction of any kind of intoxicating liquor into what is known as Native territory or the King country. The wave—I might almost say tidal wave—of temperance that seems to have lately visited European communities has to a great extent extended to the Natives. I find it so not only here, but also in the Thames (Hauraki) District, and I believe it will be found in other districts as well. A number of Natives, who used to be notorious for their tippling propensities, have now reduced their drinking to a minimum, whilst others have renounced it altogether and have joined the ranks of the Blue Ribbon Army.

Advantage is being taken of the present feeling of the Natives regarding the drink question by Messrs. C. O. Davis and T. B. Hill, of Auckland, assisted by Mr. Graham Tawhai, of the Bay of Islands, and Mr. Arthur Ormsby (half-caste), of Kopua, all of whom have the welfare of the Maoris at heart. Those gentlemen are at present visiting the different settlements in this district for the purpose of getting a petition signed by the Natives, praying His Excellency the Governor not to sanction any license for the sale of intoxicating liquor within the boundaries of the King country.

Although a few of the Kawhia Natives may have misconducted themselves in this matter, I think there is no doubt that the majority of the Natives of that place would rather that drink should not be introduced in their midst, as it will be remembered that, at the meeting they had with His Excellency at Kawhia in March last, some of them publicly asked him to use his power in preventing drink from being brought amongst them.

I am glad also to be able to report that, with the increase of industry and the comparative absence of drunkenness and crime, those Natives who live at and near Whatiwhatihoe have considerably improved their dwelling-houses and settlements. The houses are now mostly larger and better built than they used to be, and some of them have been erected in such a manner as to allow horses and conveyances to pass between them. Considering the number of Natives that sometimes congregate there, this settlement will compare very favourably with any other that I know of for cleanliness.

Unfortunately, despite all these signs of improvement in their social condition, I am sorry to say that their physical condition does not improve in a corresponding degree. Sickness is still very prevalent amongst them, and, although there has been nothing of an epidemic character, still consumption, asthma, low fever, and inflammation of the lungs have been busy at work during the past year, and a considerable number of deaths from those causes have been the result. Death has also been busy amongst the children, a number of whom have succumbed, notwithstanding the fact that the Government supply medicines free of cost for all cases of Native sickness that are brought under my notice. With regard to the mortality amongst children, I am of opinion that a great deal of it is caused by want of nourishment, as the scanty food upon which the Natives usually subsist is not at all suitable for the rearing of young children, so that, when through want of nourishment they once fall ill, their speedy death may, in most cases, be looked upon as a matter of course. Only the naturally strong and robust can stand the ordeal that the ordinary Native child has to pass through from the time of its birth until it is about twelve years old. With them it is truly "the survival of the fittest," that is, so far as constitution is concerned.

Now that the Natives have got in their crops, some of the more industrious of them are engaging themselves to European farmers for the purpose of assisting them in threshing their

wheat, oats, &c., and getting in their potatoes. But a large number of them are temporarily migrating to the Hauraki District for the purpose of digging kauri gum, which is found to be a very profitable employment during the time the price rules high for that article. Those who go for that purpose generally remain away from two to five months; and upon their return, if they have been fortunate, they, Native-like, make so much of it by exaggeration that those who previously remained behind are induced to go and try their luck also, which they do with varying success. The localities which the Natives from this district generally prefer for their gum-digging expeditions are in the ranges at the back of Hikutaia and Shortland within the Thames District.

The Tekau-ma-rua, or Disciples of Te Whiti.

In my last year's report I had to refer to the fanatical action of a section of Natives who had then lately been turned out of Parihaka, and who, under their leader Te Mahuki, thought to establish a repetition of the West Coast difficulty at their settlement here, known as Te Kumi. In that, however, they were unsuccessful, as in return for their opening proceedings (which consisted of tying up and ill-treating Mr. Hursthouse and his companions) they were promptly arrested and punished by imprisonment, which so disorganized them, and, to use a nautical expression, "took the wind out of their sails," that since their liberation they have conducted their proceedings on a much milder and less lawless basis. They (or, rather, some of them) now content themselves with making periodical attempts to return to Parihaka; but as they are not allowed to go beyond the White Cliffs, they—after inoffensively presenting themselves there, and not being allowed to proceed further—quietly return home, only to repeat the performance after they have had a short rest. They, however, commence to show signs of weakening in this idiotic policy: in fact, the odds just now are so much against them that it is quite natural they should begin to get tired. When I state that it takes them four or five days to reach the White Cliffs from where they live, and that it only takes the force stationed at that place a few minutes to turn them back, it will easily be seen that they are too heavily handicapped to succeed in their undertaking. There are, however, several signs noticeable which indicate that a change is taking place amongst them, and that for the better. They no longer impose the implicit faith they formerly did in their quondam leader, Te Mahuki. Their ignominious arrest when led by him into Alexandra last year, when they firmly believed that the result would be of an entirely different character, has shaken their faith in him; and their subsequent incarceration in prison has more than taken the edge off the fervour they previously exhibited in the cause they advocated. I am of opinion that, unless some relaxation takes place in the order that at present prevents them from returning to Parihaka, the whole thing will soon die out, and they will again revert to their former peaceful and industrious style of living. They have already shown a kindly feeling to the railway surveyors who have had to carry the line through, and to reside for a short time at their settlements; and that they do not view the railway itself with any suspicion, or have any animosity against it, is shown by the fact that some of them have already written asking, not that the line be stopped altogether, but merely that its direction should be altered in certain places in order to avoid destroying timber bushes, &c., which they wish to preserve, they at the same time offering to point out an equally suitable place for the line to go. All this, I think, speaks in their favour, and goes to show that they will soon be on good terms again with every one about them.

Occupation of Government Land by ex-Rebels under the Waikato Confiscated Land Acts.

I am not able to report that much has been done in this matter during the past year. The same causes that previously militated against it still exists, namely, the ex-rebels or King Natives will not personally accept or occupy any lands from the Government until something is finally settled regarding Tawhiao and them as a power and a people that require dealing with as a whole and not individually. There are one or two exceptions, but they are merely isolated cases: one is that of a Native named Te Matenga, who accepted land at Te Rore, about three miles from here, and which he, and his wife, their son, and a relative have occupied and industriously worked ever since; the other is the case of a man named Ngahautaua, who was one of nineteen others to whom a block of eighteen acres was offered, situated within a mile of Alexandra Township, about eighteen months ago. Up to the present time none but himself have occupied it, and he only commenced to do so a short time ago. In order that he might not be under the impression that he could claim the whole block on behalf of those who refuse to occupy, I went to see him the other day, and made him understand that only a small area sufficient to represent his own occupation and that of his wife would be awarded to him.

There are, however, other Natives, who are occupying Government land under the above-mentioned Acts, who are now altogether outside the ex-rebels under Tawhiao. I refer to Te Whatarangi and people at Mangatangi, and Te Kooti and people who will shortly be in occupation of a portion of a block of land near Orakau that is about to be purchased by the Government. There are also others who are already settled down, some on the banks of the Waikare Lake and Matahuru Stream, and others at places known as Te Ruato and Pokaiwhenua. These were all referred to in my last year's report.

Te Kooti.

Having referred to Te Kooti, I may here state that, with the exception of an occasional bout of drunkenness, he has done nothing during the last year to cause one to say that he has

not changed for the better in his character since his former misdeeds were generously pardoned by His Excellency the Governor. So far as my own observation goes (and I have had many opportunities of watching him), and also so far as I can learn from others, neither he nor his people have done anything objectionable during the past year. On the contrary, they have shown themselves thankful for the clemency extended by the Government to their chief, by endeavouring in every way to prove that they intend to respect and be amenable to our laws. Although Te Kooti himself is (constitutionally now, I think) such a confirmed tippler, he discountenances the habit amongst his people. They have made two visits to other districts during the past year—one to the Thames, and the other to Tauranga and neighbourhood—but I have not heard that either he or his people have misconducted themselves during those visits. He is evidently, I think, desirous of burying the past, and of living a different life in the future. He removed some time ago from Te Kuiti, where he used to live, to a settlement called Otewa, on the banks of the Waipa River, about twelve miles from Kihikihi. He has, however, no land of his own in this district, and is only living there on sufferance, as the land belongs to other Natives. He has, for some time past, been anxious to settle down upon some land which he could call his own, and I think that the action of the Government in giving him and his people a small block of land to live upon will be received by them with thankfulness, and will also be looked upon with satisfaction by the Native landowners of this district, as well as by the majority of Europeans. Before Te Kooti was pardoned by the Government, and whilst he was living in a state of outlawry, the Natives amongst whom he resided considered themselves bound to harbour and care for him, if not to protect him; but now that he has been pardoned they do not take so much interest in him as they formerly did, and consider that their duty and responsibility towards him have ended.

Public Works.

The public works that have been carried on in this district during the past year have been the prospecting through the King country for the best route for the main trunk line of railway, the carrying-out of the trig. survey, and the formation of the road between Kawhia and Alexandra. The first of these works has been in progress for some months past; different parties of surveyors have been engaged, all of whom have been working in different localities. They have all been able to carry on their work not only without any obstruction by the Natives, but in some cases with their co-operation. The Kawhia-Alexandra Road has been commenced during the past year. The work at the Kawhia end is being done by Natives of that district; and at this end, or rather at Hikurangi, where the road goes through the bush, a party of Armed Constabulary, numbering about sixty-six, under Captain Capel, have for the last two months been busily engaged. The whole of the work is under the superintendence of Mr. C. W. Hursthouse, Road Surveyor, of the Survey Department.

The trig. survey has been the only one that has suffered in any way from Native obstruction, and that only to a slight extent; most of the obstruction that has taken place having arisen either from a mistaken notion as to what the work meant, or an idea, which is quite common amongst Natives, that to call attention to one's self by pulling down a trig. station, and thus causing temporary trouble, is a preliminary way of demonstrating their ownership of the land on which the station was erected, and thereby constituting a sort of *primæ facie* case, to which they would not fail to make reference when the land became to be adjudicated upon by the Native Land Court. Such being the case, these slight delays, although vexatious, have been passed over without the law having been called in to punish the offenders. All the stations that were pulled down on account of the above-mentioned causes have been re-erected, and action of that kind on the part of the Natives has now ceased.

Native Schools.

I should like to be able to report that the Natives of this district—that is, the Ngatimaniapoto—having seen the evils of intemperance, and, striving as they are doing to put it down amongst themselves, had gone a little further, and taken some steps to provide their children with the means of education. This however has not yet been the case, although I do not think it will be long before they do so. Some to whom I have spoken on the subject are fully aware of the importance of educating their children, but they are not in a position just yet to take the preliminary steps of giving a piece of land for a school site, as that would necessitate an investigation into title, but that they will do so by-and-by I feel certain. At present their minds are too much taken up with the much larger questions of their recent secession from the King party, and their present action in surveying the large block of land which they claim to own in their own right, and their determination to put it through the Court as soon as the surveys are completed. As this action of theirs has met with the disapproval not only of Tawhiao and his supporters, but also of certain other tribes who claim an ownership within the block, it requires all the care and attention that their leading men can give to the matter to enable them to bring about what they want, without incurring any serious difficulty between themselves and other tribes. Given the larger matter settled satisfactorily, the smaller ones will quickly follow as a matter of course.

Résumé of the Past Year.

The past year has not by any means been an uneventful one, and several incidents of more or less importance have taken place. In July the King section of the Natives residing at

Kawhia and Aotea commenced to give us a taste of obstruction by interfering with the surveyor who was laying off the road from Raglan to Aotea. They waited patiently until the work had got as far as the confiscation line, when they opposed it from that point by pulling up the pegs and otherwise interfering with the work. Unfortunately at this time an order came to stop the formation of the road, so that the Natives, instead of being intimidated, were emboldened by what they had done: proof of which was furnished a short time afterwards, when, it having been found necessary to erect beacons and place buoys within the Kawhia Harbour, these same Natives boldly went and knocked down one and pulled up the others. What further trouble they might have caused, it is impossible to say, as at that time a force of one hundred Armed Constabulary, under Major Tuke, was landed at Kawhia, and, after erecting a redoubt, took up their permanent residence there; whereupon the Native difficulties, of which there seemed every sign of being a plentiful crop, suddenly vanished, and nothing more has been heard of them. A Native, named Te Tihirahi, was the leader of what troubles did take place, and although it was said that he acted on his own responsibility, and without the sanction of Tawhiao, I cannot help thinking that, even if he did not actually get his instructions from headquarters at Whatiwhathoe, where the Maori Cabinet meets, his action, although openly condemned by Tawhiao, was secretly supported, if not instigated, by at least one member of that Cabinet.

During this time a section of the Kawhia Natives called Ngatihikairo, who claim to be the owners of the land in the vicinity of the north side of the harbour, and extending to the top of Pirongia Mountain, were holding meetings amongst themselves, and discussing the advisableness of surveying their lands and putting them through the Court. At a meeting that the Hon. the Native Minister afterwards had with them at their settlement at Kawhia, it was finally settled they should do so, and applications were signed and sent to the Native Land Court accordingly. I think that these people (the Ngatihikairo) deserve credit for taking the initiative in this matter, and for the determined way in which they acted all through, notwithstanding the threats and opposition of the Waikatos. There is no doubt that a great deal of bad feeling was engendered between those two tribes by this action of Ngatihikairo; and, had it not been for the presence of the Constabulary Force at Kawhia, it is not at all unlikely but that they would have come to blows. As it was, the Waikatos, finding that they could not awe their opponents with threats and bounce, quietly subsided; but I think the Ngatihikairo title to this block will be hotly disputed by them in the Native Land Court.

This action of the isolated Ngatihikairo in appealing to the law by sending in applications to have their land claims decided by the Native Land Court was only a precursor of what was about to follow in another place, as Ngatimaniapoto, under their leading chiefs Wahanui, Taonui, and Rewi, had for some time previous been discussing amongst themselves the advisableness of doing the very same thing. At a large public meeting which the Hon. the Native Minister subsequently had with them at Kihikihiki in November last, at which nearly all the Ngatimaniapoto chiefs and representative men were present, it was unanimously agreed that they also should send in an application to the Court for the investigation of their claim to the large area of country extending from Aotea, on the West Coast, to Maungatautari (nearly) on the East; thence to Lake Taupo; thence to the summit of Ruapehu Mountain; thence to the sea, coming out on the West Coast at a creek known as Waipingao; and thence along the coast-line to the point of commencement at Aotea. The area of this block is estimated at something like 3,500,000 acres, the whole of which it is proposed to put through the Native Land Court as soon as the survey of same is complete. This large block, however, does not wholly belong to Ngatimaniapoto. They admit that the Whanganui, Ngatiraukawa, and Ngatituwharetoa have claims to portions of it, and representatives from each of those tribes were present at the meeting, and signed the application to Court as representing their people.

There are also other tribes, notably Ngatihaua and Waikato, who, although not admitted by Ngatimaniapoto to be owners, maintain that they have large claims to certain portions of the block within the territory lying northwards of the Mokau River, the Rangitoto Mountain, the Tuhua District, the Maungatautari Mountain, the confiscated line, and the Aotea Harbour. Southward of these boundaries I do not think there will be much dispute, other than amongst the Ngatimaniapoto themselves.

Subsequently another meeting was held by these Natives with Mr. Percy Smith, Assistant Surveyor-General, at which it was agreed that the survey should be proceeded with at once by the Government, with the sanction of all the tribes represented by the applicants, and that the cost of such survey—unless opposed and consequently prolonged by Native obstruction—should not exceed £1,600. (I might here mention that previous to this some of the Natives had commenced negotiations with private parties for this survey, which, had they been completed, would have cost them more than £20,000.)

It was also decided that, in conjunction with this survey of the boundaries of the large block, the Government trig. survey was also to be carried on, as well as the prospecting surveys for the main trunk railway-line (which were already in progress), and within one month from that date all those surveys were in full swing. The Natives, however, made a proviso that no prospecting for gold should be allowed until the land had passed the Court.

It is, I think, almost impossible to over-estimate the value of the results brought about by these meetings, when we take into consideration the fact that only a short time ago these Natives

who are now agreeable to surveys, by whatever name or in whatever shape or form, and who are now anxious to substitute their rude and undefined Native title for that of a legal one, issued under the authority of the Crown, are the self-same Natives who for the last twenty-five years have not only been bitterly opposed to anything of the sort, but have also during that time resolutely closed their country against all progress and civilization. I think it must undoubtedly be a matter for congratulation to every one when we consider that not only have the feelings of the Natives of that large district changed from those of sullenness and distrust to those of friendliness towards us as a race, but also because a large area of country which has been locked up for such a number of years will now be thrown open for settlement.

I cannot help thinking that one of the reasons of the success that has attended these surveys, especially those in the Whanganui and Tuhua Districts, is attributable to the good terms upon which we now are with the Natives who reside in those localities, which has to a great extent been brought about by the issuing of the Proclamation of the Governor which pardoned their chief Ngatai and those who were concerned in the murder of the man Moffatt some three years ago. These people do not now apprehend any punishment or harm from us, and they are therefore anxious to show us in return that we need not fear anything from them. Proof of this is shown by the way in which they treated the men Barry and McDonald, who were caught prospecting for gold only a few days ago in the Tuhua ranges, and brought in to Alexandra. Had this happened two years, or even twelve months ago, those men's lives would have been seriously endangered. Now, however, instead of being assaulted and robbed, or perhaps murdered, they are well treated, and none of their property taken from them with the exception of a bottle containing a small quantity of gold, which the Natives naturally concluded had been got from their land, and which they were justified in retaining.

I think it is a pity that Europeans should attempt just yet to prospect for gold in those districts. In the first place they are breaking the law by going there for that purpose, and in the second place the Natives do not want them there, and would rather they would keep away until matters that are of more importance to them are settled. Not only that, but the very fact of their going there in the surreptitious way in which they are doing is really delaying the opening-up of the country, and making the Natives suspicious, as they think we want to take an advantage of them. I think we cannot be too careful of the way in which we treat the Natives just now. They are at present all-absorbed with this new policy, which they have lately started, of surveying and putting their lands through the Court. The whole thing is quite a new experience to them, and their opinions as to the probable result are very diversified, some seeing in it elements of downfall for the Maori people, whilst others again claim that it will be for their benefit. Time will show which of these opinions is correct; but I think that we, as Europeans, ought not to lose sight of the fact that as it is mostly through our exhortations, and the pressure that we are bringing to bear upon them, that this result is being brought about, so shall we be to a great extent responsible if, by bad management, bad laws, or bad example, the Natives as a race are allowed to suffer by what is now being done through our agency and at our express desire. That we as Europeans will benefit by having so much new country thrown open, and our public works allowed to proceed without hindrance, there can be, I think, no doubt; whether or not the Natives will equally benefit remains yet to be seen. Similar cases in former times have shown us that, where we have been gainers, they have been losers: where we have benefited and advanced in the social scale, they have suffered and degenerated; what has resulted in success to us, has brought ruin to them. This surely ought not to be the case; and, with this new country, and, to a great extent, new people that are about to be given into our hands to manage and manipulate (so to speak), it behoves us, I think, to take special care that not only we, but they also, shall be benefited by the change.

Defection of the Chief Rewi.

In the month of January last some little excitement was caused by the Ngatimaniapoto chief Rewi (or Manga, as he is sometimes called) seceding from the arrangement, previously come to between himself and other chiefs and their people, with reference to the surveying of their land and putting it through the Court. When the matter was being discussed in the presence of the Hon. Mr. Bryce and of the rest of his tribe, in November last, Rewi was one of the most forward, and appeared most anxious that not only should everything be done that was proposed to be done, but that it should be done at once; in fact, he seemed to vie with Wahanui as to who should take the leading part in the matter. Such being the case, it seems rather strange that within less than two months afterwards he should so suddenly change his mind, and I must say that it appears difficult to give a good reason for his action. By some it is thought that he was influenced and made use of by Europeans who were connected with land speculation, and who objected to the temporary delay that was going to take place in surveying such a large block, and putting it through the Court, first as a whole, and afterwards subdividing it. What they are charged with wanting was, that it should be put through piecemeal, and quickly, so as to have something tangible, of which they could negotiate the purchase at once. I am not, however, prepared to say that that was really the reason why the old man so suddenly changed his mind—although it might have had something to do with it. There is no doubt that some influence was at work to cause him to act as he did. I am almost inclined to think that he, being an old man and very impressionable, was suddenly seized with feelings of remorse whilst listening to the speeches

of Tawhiao and others of the King party, at a meeting at Whatiwhatihoe (purposely to attend which he had come over from Kihikihi), for having deserted the King cause, of which he was one of the originators, and subsequently one of its mainstays and supports, and that while under that influence he determined to go back to his first love. Be that as it may, go over he did, and great was the rejoicing of the King party when they heard of his decision to return to them.

But this action, important as it appeared at that time, had very little effect for evil on the new policy that had been initiated: everything was so completely arranged, and had been so unanimously agreed to by all the tribes, that the falling-out of one of their number did not have any appreciable effect. Like a number of rowers in a boat, the mere fact of one ceasing for a while to row makes very little difference in the speed and direction in which the boat is going, provided that his companions keep on rowing; there is certainly a little more vigilance required on the part of the man who is steering, but that is all. In this case, whilst Rewi, as it were, ceased to row, his companions still kept on rowing, and were true to the cause they had agreed to support. The result was that things went on almost as if nothing had happened. Nothing was stopped, nothing was put back. Wahanui and all the others remained firm, and things went on as if Rewi had not fallen out of the ranks at all. I think that that was really what the old man wanted, for when he had decided to return to his child (as he called him), Tawhiao, he waited upon me and formally told me of his decision, informing me at the same time that he did not wish to influence any one else, and that he was merely carrying out the promptings of his own heart. He said that he really did not know his own mind, and he wished to be known in the future by the name of "*Kopikopiko noa*" (wandering about, or backwards and forwards). I was sorry for him, as there is no doubt that on account of his great age his mind is not so strong and active as it used to be, and he is therefore more easily led away.

Election of Native Committees.

During the month of March last I conducted the elections for Native Committees for the three Districts of Kawhia, Waikato, and Thames, in accordance with the provisions of "*The Native Committees Act, 1883.*" In each case the maximum number of members allowed by the Act was elected, namely, twelve. The Ngatimaniapoto Natives in this district profess to take a great interest in the working of the Act, and nearly all the members that were elected for the Kawhia District were nominated by them; and, although they took the precaution to choose members from different districts within the boundaries, still the fact that the Waikatos neither nominated, voted, nor in any way took part in the election will, I think, militate against its being a success at present. However, those who have been elected are anxious to be called together (as provided by the Act) and to commence work. Their great wish is to be allowed to decide upon, or rather hold, a preliminary investigation of their own claims to the large block that is now being surveyed, upon which they would make a recommendation to the Native Land Court; but I am very dubious as to their being the proper tribunal to adjudicate, even in a preliminary form, on that block, especially as their opponents and counter-claimants, Waikato and Ngatihaua, would not be represented on the Committee.

As I have already officially reported to Wellington, I found a great deal of ignorance existing in the minds of the Natives regarding the principles under which the elections had to be conducted; and I would suggest that, should it be necessary to hold any more elections for a similar purpose, more facilities be given for recording votes by fixing more polling-places within the different districts.

Tawhiao's Visit to England.

For a long time past Tawhiao and his people have entertained the idea that, if all hope were lost of their being recognized by the New Zealand Government as an independent people, with power to make laws for themselves within their own territory, some of them would go to England and lay their case either before Her Majesty the Queen in person, or before her Ministers. The starting of the King movement twenty-five years ago, and the formal handing over of the land to King Potatau at that time, was, I think there can be very little doubt, intended more for the purpose of preserving themselves as a race, and retaining a certain territory intact for the benefit of all, over which our laws, which they thought were detrimental to them, should not have effect, than with the intention of opposing or coming into conflict with us as a race. It was more as a progressive measure for themselves than as an aggressive one against us. That I think was the original intention of the promoters of the movement, but the opposition that was shown to it by the Government of the day, coupled with the lawlessness of some of the turbulent characters who afterwards joined it, caused it in a short time to assume a very different aspect, namely, a desire on the part of the Maoris to measure swords with, or rather to pit their strength against, that of the Europeans. But, putting on one side the results which followed the setting-up of the Maori King (as this is no place to discuss them), I think I am right in saying that Tawhiao and his supporters take up the same position now that the promoters of the movement took up twenty-five years ago—that is, that, while they lament and deprecate the evils that have emanated from the action that both races took in the matter when the movement was first started (and for which they say we are more to blame than they are), they at the same time take their stand upon the position that, as it was considered then so it is considered now, the only way to save the Maori race from destruction is to let them have a king and make laws for themselves.

They really want to be let alone, and to manage their own affairs without any assistance from us, and it is only quite recently that they have given up all hope of obtaining some concession of that sort from the New Zealand Government.

During the past few years, in which these people have been approachable by meetings and discussions with Ministers and representatives of the Government, it has, I think, always appeared to them that we were most anxious to make terms with them, and that eventually an arrangement somewhat similar to the one they desired would be arrived at, and that, in return for their allowing us to put roads and railroads through their territory, we would grant them an independent authority. The events that have happened during the last three years, and the change in the Government policy during that period, have opened their eyes to the fact that such a result is not at all likely to take place. Not only has the position taken up by the Government helped to bring about this result, but so also has the recent secession of the powerful Ngatimaniapoto, and the consequent loss of the large territory that would have come under Tawhiao's rule had he been previously successful in setting up a monarchy for the Maori people. Such being the case, the King party had either to make some great effort, or else to give up altogether, and accept the new position by acknowledging our sovereignty and coming in under our laws.

But this latter step they evidently do not intend to take until they have exhausted all other means; so, ignoring the fact of there being in New Zealand a representative of Her Majesty in the person of His Excellency the Governor, as well as a Parliament which has the power to make laws for all who inhabit these islands, they have determined to send some of their representatives—including Tawhiao himself—to England, to lay their case (so they fondly hope) at the feet of the Queen; and they hope by so doing to get what they desire. They have no idea of the connection of our Parliament with our Governor, and of our Governor with our Queen. Their idea is that they have only to make out a case, and that the Queen or the Parliament of England will not only give them what they ask for, but also take the New Zealand Government and the New Zealand Governor to task for not giving it to them before.

There are two things that the King Natives have a great desire should be taken in hand and dealt with by the people in England; one of these is the granting of their desire to set up a king for themselves; and the other, to have an investigation into the cause of the Waikato war, the Natives holding that they were forced into it, and that, therefore, the confiscation of Waikato was illegal, and should not have taken place. With regard to the latter I have nothing to say, but with regard to the former I think I am in a position to state that Tawhiao, in going Home to England as the so-called Maori King, does not represent more than one thousand out of a population of about forty thousand Natives in New Zealand. Those tribes inhabiting the country to the north of Auckland, from the Waitemata Harbour to the North Cape—namely, the Rarawa, the powerful Ngapuhi, and the Ngatiwhatua tribes—would scout the idea of Tawhiao or any one else but their own chiefs, being made king over them; so also would the warlike Ngatiporou of the East Coast, who themselves more than outnumber the people who support Tawhiao, taken from whatever source they can be got; so also would the Arawa tribes who inhabit the Lake District; the Thames or Hauraki Natives have the same feeling; and last, but not least, the Ngatimaniapoto, who until lately were the main supporters of the King movement, will now have nothing to do with it. Such being the case, Tawhiao and his remaining followers are in a helpless minority. When it is considered that, even admitting it were possible to give him and his few followers the power they demand, any attempt to do so would be opposed by all the tribes above mentioned, and that a multitude of troubles would thereby arise between us and them, I think it is better for us to refuse to give the King party what they want, and to put up with their opposition and reproaches, rather than to set up as a monarch of the Maori race in this part of the North Island a man who is not in any way acknowledged, or fit to be acknowledged, as such by nine-tenths of the Native population thereof. I have for some time been aware that there are really very few Natives who, if put to the test, would set up Tawhiao as a king or chief over them, possibly not five hundred who might be called genuine supporters of his; the others are made up of a few out of each of the different tribes, who only support him as a "fad" or fancy of theirs; to be forced to accept him as a reality would be very objectionable to them.

HAURAKI OR THAMES DISTRICT.

There is very little to report in connection with this district during the past year. Nothing of any importance has happened, and the Natives have continued to go on in the even tenor of their way. The death of only one person of importance has occurred, and no event of an exciting nature has taken place. The Natives have been fairly industrious and have had proportionately good crops—that is, those of them who have gone in for cultivating food. A great many of them, however, rely more upon the results of their kauri-gum-digging, and what revenue they can obtain from European sources, than upon what they get out of the ground, for a subsistence.

Taking the district all through, the Natives have been very temperate during last year, and a good number of them have joined the Blue Ribbon Army. There has also been a noticeable absence of crime, the records of the Thames Resident Magistrate's Court showing only five cases during the year, and at Te Aroha there have been three cases only, none of which were for worse crimes than drunkenness. This, over a period of twelve months, is, I think, very satisfactory.

The Natives of the Thames District, with the exception, perhaps, of the Ngatihako, were ever a good specimen of law-abiding Maoris, and this year has shown no exception to that rule.

The Native school that was last year started at Kirikiri is well attended, and the parents of the children continue to look with favour upon it.

The Natives of this district have had a fair immunity from sickness during the year, no disease of an alarming nature having attacked them; the deaths have been confined principally to young children and adults of no particular rank. There has, however, been one notable exception, and that is the case of old Te Hira te Tuiri, who died at Upper Piako in November last. He will be remembered as the chief who, on account of his great rank and position he held amongst his people, was able, in 1868-69, to keep the whole Ohinemuri District closed against gold-mining, in spite of the wishes of a large number of both Europeans and Natives, coupled with the strenuous efforts of Mr. James Mackay, who was then Government Agent for the Thames District; and it was not until seven years later—during which time the old man had manfully held his ground against overwhelming odds—that he finally gave in to the late Sir Donald McLean, in February, 1875, and allowed the country to be opened for gold-mining purposes. He was a most consistent chief of the old school, and considered more the benefit of the Maoris as a race than that of individuals, and his impression always was that the two races were so differently constituted, and their manners and customs were of such a different nature, that what was beneficial to one was detrimental to the other; hence his idea of the necessity of keeping them as far apart as possible. And he was not alone in that idea; the majority of old Natives who have had experience in the matter, and are entitled to speak (and not a few Europeans also), are of the same way of thinking. When Te Hira found that he was not able any longer to resist the wishes of his people, he reluctantly gave in; but, in order that he might not take any further part in what he considered would end disastrously to his people, he left Ohinemuri, where he was then living, and removed to Upper Piako. His death was rather sudden, as he had not previously been ailing. When Te Hira removed from Ohinemuri the mantle of opposition fell upon another now well-known old chief, named Tukukino, and a very energetic old obstructionist he turned out to be, as Ministers, Government Native Agents, and County Councillors can testify. But even he has become amenable to reason. The road between Paeroa and Hikutaia, which he so long kept closed, has been opened for some time for traffic, and there is now no further trouble in connection with it. The difficulty that previously existed regarding his claim to nearly the whole of the Komata North Block, and of which he was only one out of eight grantees, has been satisfactorily settled by the Hon. Mr. Bryce giving him double the area that he would be entitled to were an equal division made amongst the grantees, and, in addition, giving him a *tapu* reserve of fifty acres at the mouth of the Komata Stream.

A sitting of the Native Land Court was held at Shortland in September last, and a Court is now sitting at Paeroa, where there are a considerable number of claims to be disposed of.

Nothing has been done since my last report in connection with the survey of the Piako Block, on the purchase of which the Government have already spent some £21,000. The winter weather having now set in, it will be impossible to do anything further in the matter until next spring.

There have been no public works within the Thames District during the past year.

A Native Committee under "The Native Committees Act, 1883," was elected in March last, and they are about to be called together for their first meeting. From the interest the Thames Natives take in the matter, I have every reason to believe that they will make the working of the Act a success.

I have, &c.,

G. T. WILKINSON,

Government Native Agent, Thames, Auckland, and Waikato.

The Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

No. 6.

H. W. BRABANT, Esq., R.M., TAURANGA, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Tauranga, Bay of Plenty, 14th May, 1884.

In compliance with your Circular No. 3, dated the 9th ultimo, I have the honour to submit the following as my annual report on Native affairs in the Tauranga and Maketu-Rotorua Districts for the year ended the 31st March last.

I.—*Tauranga District.*

During the past year there has been little sickness amongst the Maori population: they have been assisted as usual with medical attendance and medicines on application. In March, Enoka te Whanake, one of the principal chiefs of the Ngaiterangi, died. He had been of late years an Assessor, and a staunch supporter of all Government measures. He was greatly respected by the Europeans, and his loss will be much felt by his tribe. This year, owing to the exceptional season, the Native crops are very light, and I fear considerable distress will be felt. A number of the Ngaiterangi are leaving for the gum fields to earn the means of support during the coming winter. I notice year by year that the Natives rely less on their cultivations for support, and more on money earned by working for wages for farmers, on gum-fields, roads, &c.

I am glad to be able to report an improvement in the sobriety of the Natives in this district; there is no doubt that they drink much less than a few years ago. In regard to criminal statistics: In the Police Courts at Tauranga and Waterford there have been ten charges laid against Natives, of which only four resulted in convictions. The offence was not in any case serious. In the Resident Magistrate's Court nineteen civil cases have been heard, in which one party was a European and the other a Maori, but only two in which both parties were Natives. In this district they continue to settle their petty disputes through their own Committees. Two Native schools, at Huria and Te Wairoa, in addition to the one already existing, have been opened during the year. The attendance at all three is fair, and the Natives are beginning to show interest in the question of education, which they have not done before to any extent.

II.—Rotorua-Maketu District.

There is little alteration to remark in the general condition of the Natives of this district. The resident medical officer at Ohinemutu, Dr. Lewis, attends Natives gratuitously, and supplies of simple medicines have been deposited as usual at the various Native schools. The Natives in parts of the district were short of food during the early spring of last year, and I fear will be so more generally this year, as the crops of kumara and maize are very light in some parts. However they had good potato crops. At the Ohinemutu Resident Magistrate's Court the criminal charges against Natives were—larceny, 4; assault, 1; drunkenness, 4; miscellaneous, 2: total, 11. Of these, eight resulted in summary convictions and three were dismissed. The civil cases in which Maoris were concerned were—between Maoris and Europeans, 10; cases in which both parties were Natives, 15: total, 25. Mr. Bush has continued to take the magisterial work at Maketu, and, owing to the resignation of the Clerk, I have been unable to obtain the Court statistics to embody in this report.

The Native Land Court has been sitting for some time at Ohinemutu, and is subdividing the blocks within the Thermal Springs boundary, in order that lands may be set aside for railway endowments and for leasing. The titles are complicated, and progress necessarily slow, but I am informed by the chiefs that they intend to ask the Court to sit continuously for a year, in order that the tribal lands may be divided amongst the hapus. If this is done, great progress will be made, and, it is hoped, many blocks open for leasing shortly.

The six schools for Natives in this district continue to be well attended. At two of them the increase in the number of scholars is very marked, and I notice that the Natives show increased interest in the education of their children.

An election of a Committee under the Native Committees Act of last session took place at Ohinemutu in March last. The district for which the Committee was elected comprised those of Tauranga, Maketu, Rotorua, and Taupo. Very few Natives voted, and very little interest was taken in the matter. This the Natives account for by saying that the district was too large, and that what they want is a Committee for each tribe.

III.—Opotiki District.

I have not had occasion to visit this district during the past year, but I propose to proceed to Whakatane next month, to arrange the titles to returned lands still unsettled within the confiscated block.

IV.—Tauranga Commissioner's Court.

The work of investigating the titles to the lands in the Tauranga District I have proceeded with as fast as circumstances would allow. Adjournments are continually applied for, to enable the Natives to attend Land Courts and contest cases in the adjoining districts. I have to remark also that a considerable quantity of land, which I had until lately supposed had been finally settled by previous Commissioners, I have now ascertained will have to be dealt with by me. During the year ended the 31st March the following has been the work done: I have sat with an Assessor in Court eighty-six days. I have heard sixteen new claims, amounting to 5,091 acres. I have subdivided six blocks, comprising 11,355 acres. I have also settled the lists of names for nineteen blocks, the title to which had been previously investigated either by myself or by previous Commissioners. I have issued fifty-one certificates for blocks, representing in the whole 36,802 acres. Of this area the title to 4,555 acres was investigated by previous Commissioners, and that to 32,247 acres by myself. The work still to be performed is the investigation of title to about 3,500 acres of reserves, which will have to be divided into from twenty-five to thirty subdivisions. There is also a block of 6,500 acres to be further subdivided, and the title has to be investigated of Tuhua or Mayor Island, 3154 acres, which is included in the district.

I have, &c.,

HERBERT W. BRABANT, R.M.,

Native Officer, Bay of Plenty.

The Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

No. 7.

R. S. BUSH, Esq., R.M., Opotiki, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Resident Magistrates's Office, Opotiki, 8th May, 1884.

In compliance with your circular letter I have the honour to furnish the usual annual report on the Natives of this district,

Condition of the Natives.

No very marked change in the condition of the Natives generally is noticeable, although there are many cases where improvement is perceptible, not only amongst individual Natives, but also in tribes and hapus. This improvement, though slight, is in a great measure attributable to the influence of the chief of the tribe, who, if a sober, upright, and industrious person, with the welfare of his tribe at heart, endeavours by his counsel to make them imitate him. The most marked instances of this are the Ngaitai, or Wiremu Kingi's people, at Torere; the Ngatira section of the Whakatohea, residing at Waioeka, under Hira te Popo; the Whanau-a-Ihutu, at Te Kaha, and the Whanau-a-Maru, or Te Hata's people, at Raukokore. The Whanau-a-Apanui, at Maraenui and Omaio, and the Whakatohea at Omarumutu and Opotiki, for want of industrious and right-thinking men at their head to guide them, are much behind the tribes first mentioned in many respects. The Whakatohea prefer to be left to their own resources, and resent the advice and counsel of other tribes or chiefs, much to their own detriment. The Natives resident at other parts of the district might improve their condition considerably by following the example of the Ngaitai, Te Kaha, Raukokore, and Waioeka tribes.

There has been no epidemic or disease of a serious nature amongst the Natives since my last report, but I regret to say that the Whakatohea, resident at Omarumutu and Tirohanga, the two kaingas where the outbreak of typhoid fever occurred last year, and which the doctor advised should be abandoned, are still occupying them. The only chiefs of note who have died during the year are Te Waru and Hapurona Koli. The former, who since his surrender has been living on a reserve at Waiotahi, died of consumption; and the latter, an old Urewera chief of some note, resident at Ahikereru, evidently of old age.

Disposition.

There is no ground for complaint as to the conduct and disposition of the Natives, which will compare favourably with that of those of most districts. No crimes of a serious nature have been committed. About sixty Natives have been charged in the Police Court with offences, consisting principally of breaches of the peace, drunkenness, and offences on roads. Besides the above there have been a few cases of larceny of a trivial nature, which are, however, included in the number given above. Out of the sixty some fifty were convicted. In the Resident Magistrate's Court there have been sixty cases in which Natives have been concerned, namely, thirty-eight in which Maoris were defendants, seven in which they were plaintiffs, and fifteen in which both parties were Natives. As a general rule the judgments of the Court are satisfied without further proceedings.

Wiremu Kingi, of Torere, has made a strong stand against the use of the Te Kooti form of church service, and I am glad to report that he has succeeded in stamping it out altogether amongst his own people, and nearly so amongst the tribes resident from Torere to Cape Runaway, with the whole of whom he is more or less connected, and over whom he exercises considerable influence. A church is being erected at Te Kaha, and money being collected to provide a fund to pay the stipend of a resident Native clergyman. During the recent visit of the Bishop of Waiapu to Te Kaha and other settlements between that place and Opotiki, considerable numbers of Natives collected at the various villages to meet and hear him. The Kaha people arranged to have their new church finished and ready for consecration by next Christmas, at which time they also propose having their burial-place consecrated. It is evident from the activity displayed by these tribes in church matters that the time is not far distant when the Natives, at any rate in that part of the district, will return to the religion taught them by the early missionaries.

Nothing of more than ordinary interest has occurred to agitate the Native mind, except the visits of Te Kooti and Sydney Taiwhanga. Te Kooti visited nearly all the settlements from Rotorua to Whakatane, and from Whakatane to Thames. He did not come to Opotiki. It is generally believed by the Natives at Whakatane that Te Kooti originally intended continuing his journey to Gisborne, but that he was deterred from doing so from information he gathered at Whakatane. His companions, when visiting the Village of Whakatane, never lost an opportunity of inquiring from both Europeans and Natives as to the opinion of the Poverty Bay people on his movements. The general reply was that he would not be welcomed there; in fact, his presence in that district might be even dangerous to him. The object of his visit seems to have been to make peace with the various tribes against whom he fought, and members of which had been killed during the time he was in rebellion. No other reason has been assigned for his visit. While he was at Whakatane, Wiremu Kingi, by previous arrangement, pointed out to the assembled people, in the presence of Te Kooti himself, "that he (Te Kooti) was not there that day as the Te Kooti of former years, but there owing to the clemency of the Crown, and in consequence of his late meeting with the Hon. the Native Minister at Waikato." To this Te Kooti assented. So far as I have been able to learn, Te Kooti's demeanour throughout his journey and stay at the various settlements in the Bay of Plenty was most quiet and respectful.

A few weeks ago Sydney Taiwhanga arrived at Opotiki, in response to an invitation from the Whakatohea. This tribe was the only one here which fêted him, and collected money to further the object which he professed to have in view, namely, to raise a sum of money to enable Tawhiao, himself, and other chiefs to visit England, with the object of seeking redress for the grievances of the Maori people. The Whakatohea collected about £40, which they handed to him. Sydney is said to have informed the Natives that the object of the mission to England was to

obtain a Parliament for the Natives, which would enable them to govern themselves, and he further promised them a return of the confiscated lands, or compensation in lieu thereof. Besides the Parliament, they were to receive other privileges which at present were denied them. He advised them to await the result of the mission, and in the meantime to keep their lands out of the Land Court, and on no account to pass them through that Court, as shortly new laws would be made by the Maori Parliament with reference to Maori lands; the Maori Parliament, of course, being that which Tawhiao was to obtain from England.

On the 7th instant the election of a Native Committee for this district, under "The Native Committees Act, 1883," took place at the courthouse, when fourteen candidates were nominated, a majority of whom belonged to the tribes residing between Raukokore and Torere. None of the other tribes appeared to take much interest in the proceedings, although a long notice had been given, and steps taken to make it generally known throughout the district. Several blocks of land have been surveyed between Whangaparaoa and Opotiki, and now await adjudication by the Native Land Court.

Crops.

Owing to the wet and peculiarly cold summer the maize and kumara crops are partial failures, and may be described in local parlance as "half-crops," *i.e.*, crops which will only yield half as much as when good. The maize crop in this district extended over thirteen hundred acres, a fair proportion of which is owned by Natives. Instead, therefore, of the maize export this season being about twelve thousand sacks from Opotiki, it will, I fear, only reach about seven thousand sacks. The potato crop, however, is good.

Public Works.

No public works have been undertaken by the Natives during the past year. Some persons, however, have been employed keeping the coast road in repair, the work being let at a fixed sum per annum.

Schools.

There are nine Native schools in the district under my supervision, one of which, at Omarumutu, after being closed for several years, has been reopened with an attendance of fifty. The Whakatohea now having concentrated on their reserve at Opape, I trust this will prove a successful school. A new school has been erected at Waioeka, and was opened in February last with an attendance roll of fifty-two scholars, some of whom, however, are Europeans. The last quarterly returns show an average attendance of three hundred and seventy-five children at these schools. As a rule the scholars attend regularly, but those coming from a distance are occasionally prevented from attending through the inclemency of the weather and flooded state of rivers. On the whole, however, considerable interest is displayed and progress made. The prize-money given for regular attendance has a beneficial effect on the average attendance, and the children who have passed any of the higher standards are beginning to look upon it as a disgrace not to be able to pass for the next standard at the Inspector's examination. I need scarcely say that the visits of the Inspector are not only anxiously looked forward to, but much appreciated by both the parents and scholars.

The Natives at Te Umuhika, a settlement about midway between Matata and Te Teko, are anxious to have a school erected there, and steps are being taken to have a suitable site surveyed, &c., for the purpose.

Maketu.

I have, as heretofore, discharged the magisterial duties of this Court, while Mr. Brabant, R.M., has performed those at Ohinemutu. Although the number of cases adjudicated upon in this Court are not numerous, yet they, as a general rule, are very long, especially when they happen to be Arawa cases arising out of the detention or misappropriation of horses. The Maketu Natives have been absent a considerable portion of the year attending Native Land Courts, especially that sitting at Ohinemutu *in re* the Rotorua township.

The conduct and health of these Natives will compare favourably with that of former years. The chief Te Pokiha is still a staunch teetotaler. It is a pity the remainder of the tribe do not follow his good example.

Te Kooti stayed a night at Maketu, and is reported as feeling slighted at not being made more of by Te Pokiha and other chiefs. Te Pokiha presented his celebrated carved *pataka* to Tawhiao when he visited Maketu last year; it is to be removed to Waikato.

I have, &c.,

R. S. BUSH,

The Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

Resident Magistrate.

No. 8.

Major SCANNELL, R.M., Taupo, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Resident Magistrate's Office, Taupo, 26th April, 1884.

I have the honour, in compliance with instructions contained in your Circular No. 3, of the 9th April, 1884, to furnish, for the information of the Hon. the Native Minister, my annual report upon the state of the Natives in the Taupo District.

The Natives generally during the past twelve months have conducted themselves in a quiet, orderly manner, and but four criminal cases in which Maoris were charged—all for assault or breach of the peace—were brought before me, none, however, being of a serious character.

There have been eight civil cases in the Resident Magistrate's Court between Maoris and Europeans, and one in which Maoris only were concerned.

The condition of the Natives remains much the same as regards their industrial pursuits as reported on by me last year, the chief difference being in the decreased amount of land placed under crop, as last year they were under the impression that a sitting of the Native Land Court would be held here, which they now appear to have given up all hopes of. A number of men belonging to hapus on the eastern and south-eastern shores of the lake have been employed by Mr. A. B. Wright, of the Survey Department, in constructing the road laid out by him last year between Taupo and Murimotu, and a branch of it from the Tongariro River to Tokaanu, and have been earning good wages. The formation of the road is completed as far as the Tongariro River, and the Tokaanu branch is now in course of construction.

In February a dispute occurred between the Tokaanu Natives and Mr. Wright, the Natives stating that they would prevent the road from being proceeded with any further. At Mr. Wright's request I attended a meeting between them at Tokaanu, at which the objections to the continuance of the road-work were finally withdrawn, having been, in my opinion, made in the first instance, more with a view of obtaining increased wages than with any serious intention of interfering with the progress of the road.

During the past year several surveys of large blocks of Native land at the southern end of Lake Taupo have been completed, notably those of Okahukura and Rangipo-Waiiau, each containing about 80,000 acres. These surveys, having been made on the application of the Native owners, who have hitherto strenuously opposed surveys of any description, furnish a proof that they are beginning to appreciate the utility of getting their lands passed through the Native Land Court, and of obtaining a definite title.

The health of the district has been generally good, very few cases of serious illness or deaths having occurred, the latter having been principally among children. The Natives are getting more and more in the habit, in any case of sickness, of applying at the Constabulary surgery for advice and medicine, and in consequence many cases are cured which, a few years ago, might have terminated fatally.

I have, &c.,

D. SCANNELL,

The Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

Resident Magistrate.

No. 9.

JAMES BOOTH, Esq., R.M., Gisborne, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Resident Magistrate's Office, Gisborne, 1st May, 1884.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Circular No. 3, of the 9th April, 1884; and I have much pleasure in reporting that the Natives in this district have during the past year been quiet and orderly, and that there has been less crime amongst them than for some years past.

The sitting of the Native Land Court at Gisborne for some months during the year has enabled the Natives to put a good deal of land through the Court, and many transactions in the way of sales and leases have—now that clear titles have been obtained—been satisfactorily completed. Whilst referring to the Native Land Court I think it right to call the attention of the Hon. the Native Minister to the fact that the sittings as at present held are indirectly the cause of immense loss in time and money to the Native applicants attending them. In this, as in many other districts, the Native owners of any given block of land are, in times of peace, spread over a large extent of country: for instance, at the late sitting of the Land Court here, many applicants came from distances ranging up to a hundred miles, and, as the claims of these applicants would be affected by original claims, by subdivisinal and succession claims, they were obliged to remain over nearly the whole sitting. It has been proved over and over that if an owner absents himself, trusting to his tribe to protect his interests, he stands a very poor chance of getting his fair share of land. Besides this loss of time and absence from their cultivations, there is the necessary cost for food, pasturing for horses, &c. During the sitting of the Court here there was little or no drunkenness, and yet the cost to each individual claimant under the circumstances I have mentioned must have been enormous. Many men, having been here for months, have been obliged to sell the land to which they had got a title, to pay expenses. The only remedy I can suggest in such cases as I have mentioned is that Courts should be held more frequently, and thus prevent an over-accumulation of work. If Courts could be held at stated periods, and the work could be got through at each sitting in one or two months, there would not be much hardship in the matter; but in the present state of things claimants must attend at ruinous cost, or run the risk of being left out in the cold; and if, being aggrieved, an application for rehearing is sent in, the natural reply is, "You ought to have been there, or have taken care that you were represented."

I have already stated that there is less crime than in past years. Early in the year, however, the Survey Department, in laying off and forming the Gisborne-Waiapu Road, had a

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 Waioamatini 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 Waioamatini 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.

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.

The Natives show a becoming respect for the law, and readily obey the summonses issued out of our Courts. Some little time ago a charge of arson was sworn against three Natives living at Murimotu. I issued summonses for their attendance before me here. The summonses were promptly obeyed. Trial by a jury of Maoris is not considered by our local Press to be quite a success. In the case I have just referred to, at the last sitting of the Supreme Court here, in spite of strong evidence of the defendants' guilt, the Maori jury brought in a verdict of "Not guilty." Need I remark that European juries sometimes take the same course under similar circumstances.

Coming now to the important question, Are the Maoris, as a nation, dying out? In my opinion, "Yes;" but not so fast as some think. So far as I have observed, the death-rate seems to be the heaviest among those living near European towns and settlements; while those residing far away from our towns, and who are not brought much into intercourse with the pakehas, are much harder: attributable, I think, very largely to their living in primitive Maori style. Those living nearer our towns suffer, to some extent, from intemperance, and, in consequence, irregular and unhealthy habits of life; and also by wearing European clothes in the day-time, and returning to their Maori habit of being lightly clad at night, and going, while so clad, from ill-ventilated and heated whares into the cold air, and thus get sudden chills, causing almost universal suffering from pulmonary complaints, from which, in too many instances, they languish and die.

On the 28th Janury last I held an election here of Native persons to serve as members of the Native Committee for the Whanganui District. Some interest was shown by the Natives in the district, but not as much as I expected. Those elected, though not men of the highest rank or possessing the greatest personal influence, are second to none in intelligence. I am a little curious to see how these Committees will be found to work.

Major Kemp has made himself very popular with the Europeans generally in this part of the district. He received quite an ovation at a public meeting held here lately, when he made an excellent speech on the subject of throwing open the Upper Whanganui, Murimotu, and Tuhua country for railway purposes and gold-seeking, offering, if need be, to go with the prospectors, and aid them in every way his extensive influence could be brought to bear. The hearty and strong support he is giving Mr. Rochfort and party in surveying the much-talked-of, and by many the much-hoped-for, central railway-line, may be regarded as proofs of the genuineness of his friendly professions. He has assured me of his wish to aid me to the best of his ability in such steps as I may find it necessary or desirable to take for the purpose of securing the real and lasting welfare of the Maoris in the district.

Churton's College has not proved such a success as it deserves to be, and as was hoped it would be. I think I am right in saying that only about twenty children receive instruction there. I think one of the reasons why so few of the up-river Natives send their little girls to this institution is that, owing to their fondness for their children, they like to have them about them at their pas and kaingas, and therefore refrain from sending their little maids a long distance to this home school, so generously given them and endowed by Mr. Henry Churton, of this place. I think it is a very great pity the Natives do not allow their children to avail themselves of the great privileges and benefits so nobly placed at their disposal. Those children who have been there some time speak the English language clearly and distinctly, and sing English ballads and songs remarkably well. In Mr. and Mrs. Menzies they have a master and matron eminently suitable for, and most devoted to, the work in which they are engaged.

The inquiry lately held at Marton, by Mr. Commissioner Mackay, for the purpose of ascertaining and determining in whom the Reureu Reserve, on the south bank of the Rangitikei River, should be vested will tend much to settle the minds of the Natives interested in or living on the block. I understand he is of opinion that a Crown grant in favour of the four hapus residing on the block should be issued. I think this will give general satisfaction, and will, I believe, give effect to the wishes expressed by the donor, the late Sir Donald McLean, then Native Minister.

The prospect of a final and satisfactory settlement of the difficulties in regard to the Ota-makapua Block should be hailed with great pleasure by all parties concerned. It should also have the good effect of causing a very large block of land to be thrown open for sale, and made available for settlement.

Throughout the district the Natives, as a whole, are peaceable and quiet in their conduct; and I rejoice on being able again to report favourably on them.

I have, &c.,

ROBERT WARD, R.M.

The Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

No. 12.

R. PARRIS, Esq., New Plymouth, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

New Plymouth, 12th May, 1884.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Circular Letter No. 3, of the 9th April, calling for the usual annual report upon the state of the Natives in this district, for presentation to Parliament.

The Natives of this district, with the exception of a very small minority, are as much as ever under the influence of Te Whiti, and that influence is not confined to this district only, but has taken root and is producing effects in many other parts of this the North Island, and of the South Island also, as shown by the large presents of fruit, fish, and preserved birds which are frequently sent to him from the South Island, besides large presents raised by subscriptions from the Natives of this district, which enable him to entertain his visitors with hospitality on a very different system to that which prevailed before he and Tohu were taken away from Parihaka, when nothing but food the produce of the Natives was allowed, that then being his rule of demarcation.

The absence of Te Whiti and Tohu from Parihaka, and their experience whilst away, have wrought a wonderful change upon them as regards the mode of entertaining visitors. At a recent gathering of Natives and Europeans at Parihaka last March the food was supplied in a most elaborate manner, a professional cook having been employed for the purpose at a high rate of pay, and from a person who was present I am informed the following articles were put before the assembled visitors for their entertainment: Beef, mutton, pork, sucking-pig, geese, pies (meat and fruit), abundance of each. For dessert, all sorts of fancy biscuits, almonds, raisins and figs, jellies, &c., champagne, and several other sorts of wines, ale, and porter. About one hundred Europeans were present; Te Whiti civil and polite to all. During the present month another subscription was set on foot, and I have reason to believe that over £500 was raised and taken to Parihaka about a week ago: a fanatical imposition, for no other object than to foster the vanity of an ambitious pretender. This entertainment in March was spoken very highly of by those who were present, without considering how the cost of it was met, not knowing that it was by subscriptions forced, by a superstitious fanaticism, from poor indigent Natives, whose homes are rendered painfully comfortless and neglected by the demands made upon them to maintain the folly and waste of expenditure at Parihaka.

For the last twelve months the general behaviour of the Natives has been satisfactory. They have shown a willingness to submit to the settlement of the land question by the West Coast Royal Commission, and to settle down upon the land allotted and Crown-granted to them; but, if this constant drain upon their meagre resources is kept up, their future is hopeless as regards their improving their land or their own condition; and, although the social relations of the races is much improved, and things are going on satisfactorily, it must not be forgotten that this has been in a great measure brought about by the presence of the Armed Constabulary in the district, ready to check any unlawful movements. The fact of large numbers of Natives attempting to get to Parihaka every month raises the question of what would be the effect of removing the restriction and allowing them the rights of free subjects, which, strange to say, is now advocated by the public, who, no doubt mean well, but possibly have not duly considered probable results. Te Whiti always advocated peace and quietness when the district from Stony River to Waingonoro may be said to have been entirely subject to his control, but with all his influence he was not able to restrain the Natives from lawless acts of robbery and insolence, and allowed Parihaka to become a place of refuge for criminal offenders, professing at the same time to condemn their conduct, without deeming it necessary to hand them over to be tried in our Courts, arrogating to himself Divine authority to condone offences of the worst degree. This state of things might never occur again, but when Parihaka becomes free of restrictions I incline to the belief that large numbers of Natives, not only of this district but from distant parts, will again settle there. The circumscribed limits of the land allotted to the Parihaka Natives render it very undesirable that a large body of Natives who have no interest in the land, and only a fanatical attachment to Te Whiti, should again settle down there; for, as was the case before the dispersion in November, 1881, so in all probability Te Whiti would again lose control of them, and he himself relapse into his old enigmatical state of mind, the climax of which I will not presume to foretell. Any prospect of the Natives being improved by schools being established is out of the question so long as Te Whiti repudiates the idea that any good can be derived from them, arrogating to himself and Tohu only the necessary qualification to instruct in matters human and Divine. These two individuals are a mystery, their wide-spread influence is a mystery, and how so many devoted followers can be induced to disregard their own true interest to serve them is a mystery. The current opinion obtained amongst the Natives at present is that periodical attempts to get to Parihaka will be continued, both from south and north, the southern Natives to come to the bridge at Opunake, and the northern Natives to come to Pukearuhe, in the belief that sooner or later there will be supernatural interposition, which will remove every obstacle.

I have, &c.,

The Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

R. PARRIS.

