

who were committed for trial; but the Grand Jury found "No true bill," and the case collapsed. It is believed to have been a phase of the Robertson v. Graham case, which has so often occupied the Supreme Court, and which is not yet settled. With the exception of the Wairoa affair, the charges brought against Natives during the past year have been of a minor character, and I have much pleasure in being able to report that, on the whole, drunkenness is steadily decreasing.

There has been a considerable amount of sickness amongst the Natives, but nothing of an epidemic character. Several Natives have died recently at Te Wairoa, and several are now ill; but they are suffering from a variety of disorders. I regret to have to record the recent death there of Renata Ngahana, a young chief of good character and great ability, who held an appointment as a Native Land Court Assessor, and who was under orders to resume duty at a northern Court at the time of his decease. His loss will be seriously felt by the Tuhourangi Tribe. Amongst other deaths may be noted that of Niramona Pini, a young man of high rank in the Ngatiwhakaue Tribe. I am still, however, of the opinion expressed last year, that the Natives in this district are not actually decreasing in number, and I believe that the census just taken will prove such to be the case.

Owing to the late drought the potato-crops have been a partial failure, and I fear that many of the Natives will be short of food during the coming winter and spring. It is hoped, however, that work will shortly be started on a section of the railway-line here, which will afford the young men an opportunity of earning the wherewithal to provide the necessaries of life.

The Natives continue to take great interest in the education of their children, and it is intended to establish a new school near Te Ngae as soon as a proper title to the site can be obtained through the Native Land Court. So far as the primary Native schools are concerned, I think the money spent is judiciously invested, but I am not so sanguine regarding the present system of higher education of Native children at Te Aute College and elsewhere. If the good work done at those places could be continued by subsequently teaching trades under a system of compulsory apprenticeship as a *sine quâ non*, some permanent benefit might be hoped for. As it is, after leaving those institutions they return to their homes at a critical period, and the result in most cases is that "their last state is worse than their first." I believe that children committed to industrial schools can now be apprenticed out and kept under supervision until they are twenty-one years of age, when they are really old enough to take care of themselves, and that consequently there will be less danger of their reverting to their old habits than was formerly the case. I respectfully beg to suggest that something similar should be done for those Native children who may display natural ability in the primary schools.

I have, &c.,

H. DUNBAR JOHNSON,

The Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

Government Agent.

No. 9.

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

SIR,—

Resident Magistrate's Office, Taupo, 21st April, 1886.

In compliance with instructions contained in your Circular No. 2, dated the 24th ultimo, I have the honour to forward, for the information of the Hon. the Native Minister, my annual report upon the Natives in this district.

During the past twelve months the Natives generally, although a Land Court has been sitting for nearly three months, have conducted themselves very quietly, no serious cases having been brought before me in my capacity as Resident Magistrate, and drunkenness has considerably decreased.

The amount of cultivations amongst the Natives remains much as I reported last year: if anything, it is a little less. But a considerable number of those Natives residing at the south end of the lake have been employed by Mr. A. B. Wright, of the Survey Department, in constructing a road between Poutu, on Lake Rotoaira, and Waimarino, where it strikes the railway-line. These people have been allotted small contracts, and are, I believe, in most instances making good wages.

In the month of September a large Native meeting took place at Poutu, at which Mr. E. S. Thomson, the Clerk of the Court here, was present by my direction to report on behalf of the Government, and a full report of the proceedings was forwarded at the time. Although the resolutions passed at that meeting were adverse to sale or lease of land, Land Courts, &c., I observe that with very few exceptions the signers have been the first to apply to pass their lands through the Court. In fact, I think but little difficulty will be experienced from any of them.

A census of the Maori population was taken in February, when a nominal return of 1,259 was given; but, as the census was taken during the sittings of a Land Court, and as in many instances they refused to give any information whatever, this number must be considered as only approximate.