

1888.

NEW ZEALAND.

REPORTS FROM OFFICERS IN NATIVE DISTRICTS.

(In continuation of G.-1, Session II., 1887.)

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.

SIR,—

Native Office, Wellington, 25th April, 1888.

I have the honour, by direction of the Hon. the Native Minister, to request that you will be good enough to forward at your earliest convenience, but not later than the 31st proximo, the 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.

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

SIR,—

Resident Magistrate's Office, Mangonui, 29th May, 1888.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your circular letter No. 12, of the 25th April, 1888, and, in compliance with the request conveyed therein, to report as follows upon the state of the Natives in my district :—

I am very pleased to be able to state that the health of the people has been upon the whole very good indeed during the past twelve months, and the rate of mortality has been very low. It is much to be regretted that there is no great change for the better in their mode of living. It seems impossible to convince them that their only hope of securing ordinary immunity in the future from epidemical diseases lies in the erection of a better class of dwelling-houses, and in the choice of more healthy situations for their kainga. I have very little hope that any radical improvement in these respects will take place until the Natives are forced to individualise their land-titles, and thereby encouraged to break up their present communistic style of living.

During the present month a fine old Native has passed away, in the person of Hetaraka Repa. He died at Lower Waihou, in the Hokianga District. He was over seventy years of age, and for many years had been in receipt of a pension of £20 per annum from the Government. He had been presented with a medal for services rendered to the colony during Heke's war, and many tales are told of his acts of daring and of his devotion to the European cause. A few months ago he was thrown from his horse and broke one of his legs, and from the result of this accident he never recovered. There are very few men of his stamp now living, and his loss is much to be regretted.

There is very little drunkenness now amongst the Natives as compared with former years. They are becoming more and more alive to the evil effects of giving way to the temptation of drink, and the result is that there is a great improvement in their moral condition. There is extraordinarily little crime amongst them, and this, too, although there are, according to the last census, some 6,000 Natives residing in my Resident Magistrate's district. It is quite an uncommon thing for a Native to be charged in any of my eight Courts with a really serious offence. I consider that this is a great matter for congratulation. As a rule they readily submit to the jurisdiction of the Court, and, instead of invoking, as in the past, the aid of the Maori Runanga, they now, in most instances, fight out their grievances on the floor of the R.M. Court. As a people they dearly love litigation, and enjoy nothing so much as a good field-day in Court. Each side will generally employ a solicitor, and the interest taken by outsiders in the ingenuity of the "roia" is most absorbing.

During the last three months four Natives have been convicted of sly grog-selling in this district. This is quite a new departure for the Natives; but it transpired in each instance that they were instigated to the commission of the offence by Europeans, who took good care to keep themselves in the background.

The cultivation of the soil is still very much neglected, and few of the people raise more crops than barely suffice for their own subsistence. There is great inducement to neglect in this particular, in the fact that the Natives are able with so little trouble to provide amply for all immediate