

## No. 4.

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

SIR,—

Native Office, Alexandra, 2nd June, 1888.

In accordance with request contained in your circular No. 12, of the 25th April last, I have the honour to forward herewith my annual report upon the Natives in my district. The delay in sending in this report has been caused by my having been engaged during the last two months at the Native Land Court now sitting at Otorohanga.

*Health and Social Condition.*—There is no change to report under this heading. The general state of health of the Natives has been about the same as it was last year, and no epidemic sickness has appeared amongst them. The only chief of rank who has died is one named Tutata. He died at Waahi, near to Huntly. He belonged to the Waikato tribe called Ngatimahuta, and was related to Tawhiao. He had been an invalid for a number of years, and was a great sufferer from asthma and general debility. His age was about fifty years. Temperance continues to be a very marked feature amongst the Natives, and for which they are entitled to great credit, as the means and sources for obtaining intoxicating drink are as numerous as ever. As a rule the Europeans supply the hotels and intoxicating drinks, with all their evils, and also, as a set-off, perhaps, the teetotal lecturer; but, whilst the Natives have unlimited access to the former, the influence of the latter hardly ever reaches them, as nearly all the temperance lecturers speak in English only, and only address English-speaking audiences; so the temperance principles of the Maori have in most cases originated with himself, possibly from knowledge, dearly acquired, that intoxicating liquors are bad things for them both physically and socially. Knowledge so gained is likely to have a more lasting effect than would the fervid address or array of statistics of the ordinary temperance orator. As there is little railway or road work going on in my district now at which Natives can be employed, those who desire to earn money leave home, sometimes for months together, and journey to the kauri-gum fields in the Hauraki, Kaipari, and districts further north.

*Native Land Court in the King-country.*—The Native Land Court, which, so far as that portion of the King-country called Rohepotae is concerned, had not, until the 2nd April last, done anything beyond giving its judgment as to the ownership of the whole block (1,636,000 acres) and completing the list of names of owners, is now hard at work subdividing the same. Two lines of large tribal subdivisions (viz., those of Whanganui and Ngatiraukawa) have already been fixed by the Court, and the disputed claims for subdivision of the Ngatihikairo and Ngatimaniapoto portions commencing from the confiscation line, from there about fifteen miles up the Waipa River, and extending over to Kawhia, on the West Coast, are now being heard by the Court. The Natives, who some months ago seemed averse to advancing any stage beyond getting an order for the whole of the land in favour of all the tribes who had proved their ownership to it, have now, thanks to the efforts of some of the more enterprising of them, realised the fact that such a large block as the Rohepotae is cannot remain in one block with about 4,500 owners, and that those owners are not anything like the happy family as to the question of intertribal boundaries and after-policy as to what they shall do with their land that some of the leading chiefs hoped to see would be the case. So that, notwithstanding the advice and strenuous efforts of some of their leaders, the majority appear to have come to the conclusion that the sooner subdivision takes place the better for all parties; and, from the number of applications for subdivision sent in, there is work, I think, for the Court here for several months to come. Judge Mair and Paratene Ngata (who represented the first Native Land Court that sat in this district) are still the Judge and Assessor respectively, and the quiet and decorous way in which the Natives conduct themselves in Court is evidence of the respect in which they hold those officials. For some time past a great deal of soreness has been felt by the Ngatimaniapoto and Ngatiraukawa tribes within this district, because the Chief Judge of the Native Land Court refused their application for a rehearing of that portion of the Taupouuiatia Block known as Maraeroa-Hurakia, the boundaries of which were set forth in their application to him for a rehearing. The investigation *re* the Taupouuiatia Block took place at Taupo, and was awarded (speaking generally) to Te Heuheu and his people, the Ngatituharetoa, by which award, so far as concerns Maraeroa and Hurakia, the Ngatimaniapoto and Ngatiraukawa consider their interests have been sacrificed. Having failed to obtain a rehearing through the head of the Native Land Court, they have moved the Supreme Court to grant an injunction against anything being allowed to be done affecting the land by the people to whom it was awarded at the Taupo Court, pending the result of a petition for a rehearing which I believe they are about sending or have sent to Parliament. It was thought at one time that the disappointment and soreness felt by the Ngatimaniapoto and Ngatiraukawa at their application for rehearing being refused by the Chief Judge would cause them to block any further proceeding in the Court here *re* subdivision, &c., of the Rohepotae Block (of which they are the principal owners); but, fortunately, that has been averted and the work allowed to proceed, the Natives being content to make use of the courses provided by law for the redress of grievances.

*Tawhiao and the King-movement.*—During the past year the King-movement—as represented at Whatiwhatihoe, where Tawhiao lives, and which is looked upon as head-quarters—has been getting perceptibly weaker, as evidenced by the few people who now live there, and the increased desire of many who are supposed to live there permanently to get away gum-digging or elsewhere, to shift for themselves. Tawhiao himself, until a short time ago, had been absent for months travelling about with a few of his people from settlement to settlement within the Waikato, Thames, and Piako districts, with apparently very little end in view, the duration of the stay in each place being generally regulated by the amount of food that the local Natives had in stock at the time of his arrival. It has been evident to a close observer that the end could not be far off. Their settlement at Whatiwhatihoe has now been occupied for so many years that it was absolutely necessary that a shift should be made somewhere else, as the producing-powers of the soil in that locality are running out. Looked at from a “King” point of view, it was not possible to move southwards, as