

I understand that the village of Parihaka itself has been considerably improved lately, and more houses are being built there. Te Whiti still holds great sway over the minds of the majority of the Natives of the district, but his sayings and doings are not paraded now as formerly.

The Natives have no special industrial occupations outside their usual cultivations, but employ themselves at times in picking fungus, and, in the season, gathering grass-seed. Schooling is neglected except in a few cases, and the majority of the younger people cannot write their names, whereas the elder generation can nearly all write fairly.

At and about Patea, and southwards, the Parihaka influence is not so strong, the Natives having taken to a form of European worship; but whether it has any strong hold on them is a question. In the last-mentioned part of the district an agitation is going on for the purpose of obtaining more power to deal with their lands themselves, and this feeling has been intensified lately by the passing of "The West Coast Settlement Reserves Acts Amendment Act, 1887," as the owners of the land feel aggrieved at the clauses which enable the lessees to obtain new leases without the consent of the grantees, at a rental to be computed on the unimproved value of the land comprised in the leases; whereas under their present leases all improvements were to go to the owners of the land at the end of the term of lease: and, as some of the leases have expired since the passing of the Act, or are about shortly to expire, the Natives are aggrieved at the innovation, which they consider detrimental to their interests. In the northern end of the district, however, very little interest is displayed beyond a passive resistance to any law emanating from Parliament, arising principally from the sympathy with Te Whiti, although many individual Natives would be glad to see restrictions on their management of their own land relaxed.

The Native Land Court has sat and adjudicated on considerable blocks of land, but the Te Whiti-ites have held aloof, allowing matters to go by default where their interests were concerned, as they have done for many years past in similar matters.

The health of the Natives has been fairly good, there having been no special epidemic amongst them; but disease and death is much more rife with the Native race than amongst a similar number of Europeans. The most noted Native death which has happened in my district during the year is that of the old Patea chief, Taurua who for many years had held a high place in the esteem of Europeans and Natives of his district, and all along the coast.

I have, &c.,

W. RENNELL,

Reserves Trustee.

The Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

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