

1889.

NEW ZEALAND.

REPORTS FROM OFFICERS IN NATIVE DISTRICTS.

[In continuation of G.-5, 1888.]

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, 23rd May, 1889.

I have the honour, by direction of the Hon. Mr. Mitchelson, to request that you will be good enough to forward at your earliest convenience, but not later than the 20th 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, 15th June, 1889.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your circular No. 4, of the 23rd May last, and, in compliance with the request conveyed therein, I now beg to forward the subjoined report upon the state of the Natives in my district:—

During the past year the health of the Natives has, upon the whole, been very good. An epidemic of typhoid fever broke out at Waikare, near Russell, a few months ago, which proved fatal to several people, but it did not spread to any great extent; and I think that this is the only late instance of anything approaching an epidemic in my district. The principal death of note has been that of Maihi Paraone Kawiti, a famous Ngapuhi chief. He died at his residence at Waiomio, near Kawakawa, on the 21st May last. He was one of the old school, and intensely conservative in his ideas, and exercised very large influence amongst the Ngapuhi Tribe in the direction of retaining the old Maori mana.

Meetings with a view to keeping alive political agitation have been largely held throughout the district. The most important was that held at Waitangi in March. There were many Natives assembled from all parts, the attendance being estimated at over fifteen hundred. Nothing practical resulted from their deliberations; but there was a great deal of *kerero*, and an enormous consumption of food. These meetings have an undeniably bad effect upon the Natives, who impoverish themselves to make a big show, with the result that they have subsequently to undergo a lengthened period of semi-starvation.

I was pleased to notice during the past season that there was an unusually large area of ground under cultivation at most of the large settlements, and that the work had been done in a far more methodical manner than usual. It is to be hoped that the improvement in this respect will be permanent.

Shore-whaling is still extensively carried on during the season by the Natives residing on the east coast. A considerable amount of money is invested each year in the venture, and it is much to be regretted that the return is so small. The want of success is largely owing to a lack of experience on the part of the Natives.

I have never known the district so free from crime as it has been during the past year. This is all the more noteworthy and satisfactory owing to the fact that the people have been unusually poor. The two main sources of income in the district—namely, gum and timber—have been unprecedentedly stagnant, and there has been very little inducement to work.

Temperance principles still spread amongst the Natives, and their influence for good is largely felt. The difference between the existing state of things and what used to be is truly wonderful, and there is great cause for thankfulness.