

Te Kooti has a number of adherents in Poverty Bay and between this and Wairoa. I do not know what sort of religion they profess to believe in. One of their practices is to ignore Sunday as a day of rest: as to whether they set apart any day of the week for religious observances, I am not aware. They profess the most profound belief in Te Kooti, and until the last Te Kooti episode—which has slightly shaken their confidence—they believed him to be divinely inspired. As to how Te Kooti was invited to come to Poverty Bay in March last by some of his followers; how he determined to visit the scene of his atrocious massacres of twenty years ago, with a following of several hundred fanatics; how the settlers of this district took prompt action to prevent the threatened visit; how he was requested by the Government not to come; how he still persisted in his determination; and how, after disobeying the peremptory orders of the Hon. the Premier in starting with his large following for Poverty Bay, he was at last apprehended and brought to trial—all this being now matter of history, it is not necessary for me to say more on the subject, excepting that I am of opinion that if Te Kooti had wished to visit his relatives as a peaceable man, and had come quietly with half a dozen followers, none of the settlers would have taken the slightest notice of him. It was not fear of Te Kooti personally, but the fact that he was coming here with some hundreds of followers, which following would be enormously increased on his arrival in the Bay by his adherents here and at Wairoa, that determined the settlers to resist his coming; and the timely visit of the Hon. the Premier, and the prompt action which he took to prevent the threatened visit, and which had so successful an ending, has filled the heart of every settler in the district with gratitude to the Government who, through the Premier, so speedily and effectually succeeded in preventing what might have led to a serious disturbance, and would in all probability have thrown back the district for some years.

I have, &c.,

J. BOOTH,

Resident Magistrate.

The Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

No. 7.

Mr. W. RENNELL, Reserves Trustee, New Plymouth, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

New Plymouth, 10th June, 1889.

In reply to your circular letter of the 23rd May (No. 4), I have the honour to report that Native matters have been quiet on this coast during the past year, the Parihaka gatherings being a mere shadow of what they were formerly, and those who were so ready to run off there monthly at one time now seem more inclined to take to steady industry, for which there is a good opening for them in flax-cutting and -dressing, besides picking fungus, harvesting grass-seed in its season, and many other ways. They have also devoted more time to cultivating their land, and fencing it in, than for some time past. There are, of course, plenty of Natives who still believe in Te Whiti, but the feeling is not so general or so strong as it has been, and is dying out, so far as at present can be seen.

Those Natives who live between Normanby and Waitotara have been, and are, greatly agitated over the question of rent for renewal of leases which they had given to European tenants before the issue of Crown grants, the tenants now requiring revised rents, longer terms, and more secure holdings, which the Natives were unwilling to give; and the matter is being settled by arbitration, one arbitrator being appointed by the lessee, and one by the Government, on behalf of the Natives (who decline to appoint). To this course the Natives object, but are taking the matter into the law-courts for a redress of any grievance they consider they may have, feeling that the time is past for attempting any other course, and that their only real safeguard is the law.

The general health of the Natives in my district has been good during the past year, but in my opinion the mortality is still very heavy as compared with that of the European race.

I find a slight improvement in educational matters amongst them, as formerly they entirely ignored the benefits their children might gain by education, but lately a few parents have applied for admission for their children to the public schools. I hope the movement may increase, but my impression is that, Maori youthful life being of rather a precarious nature, the generality of the parents do not care to submit their children to the discipline of a school, when an early death may make all learning useless.

During the past twelve months death has removed two more of our Assessors—Porikapa, of Stony River, who lived to a great age, greatly respected by both Europeans and Maoris; and Wetere, who died at a comparatively early age at Mokau. The only stipendiary Assessor still surviving is Hone Pihama, who, I regret to say, is also ailing, and now rarely leaves his village at Oeo.

I have, &c.,

W. RENNELL,

Reserves Trustee.

The Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

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