

1890.
NEW ZEALAND.

REPORTS FROM OFFICERS IN NATIVE DISTRICTS.

[In Continuation of G.-3, 1889.]

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, 12th May, 1890.

I have the honour, by direction of the Hon. the Native Minister, to request you will be good enough to forward as early as convenient, but not later than the 12th proximo, the annual report upon the state of the Natives in your districts, 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, 12th June, 1890.

In compliance with the request conveyed in your Circular No. 7, of the 13th ultimo, I have now the honour to report as follows upon the state of the Natives in my district:—

During the past year the general health of the Natives has been very good indeed. There was a slight outbreak of typhoid some months ago at Matihetihe, a small settlement on the coast, between Hokianga Heads and Whangape, but steps were successfully taken to prevent its spread. At the present time a mild form of *la grippe* is prevalent throughout the district, but I have not heard of any fatal cases.

In December last several deaths occurred at Rawhiti, near Russell, from eating poisonous honey. It appears to be established beyond doubt that in some localities honey, at certain times of the year, is highly poisonous. In the Rawhiti instances the honey partaken of was from boxes, and the same bees had been periodically robbed by the Natives and the honey eaten with impunity. Again, in April last four Natives living near here found a bee-tree in the bush well stocked with honey. They ate ravenously of the honey, and very shortly afterwards were taken seriously ill. They managed to crawl home, and their friends immediately sent for Dr. Trinnell, who attended without delay. By this time their convulsions were so acute that the doctor despaired of saving their lives. He, however, persevered in what he considered the right treatment, and they ultimately recovered. The Natives now throughout the North are so intensely scared that they will for the future leave honey alone, fond of it as they are.

The fanatics at Upper Waihou still keep up their peculiar mode of living. They hold themselves entirely aloof from other Natives. They have gained no fresh adherents lately, and do not appear likely to give us much further trouble.

There has been very little crime indeed in the district of late, and the Court records in this respect will compare favourably with those of any other Native district in the colony. This immunity from crime is owing to a great extent to the wide spread of temperance amongst the Natives; a few, of course, still give way to excess, but it is the exception and not the rule to see drunken Natives nowadays.

I regret that there is no improvement to be noticed in their mode of life and in the extent of their cultivations. The ease with which they can earn money by gum-digging of course accounts for this, and the necessarily roying life is directly demoralising.

The Native schools are still fairly well attended, and are of great value as a civilising agency.

I have, &c.,

The Under-Secretary,
Native Department, Wellington.

H. W. BISHOP,
Resident Magistrate.

No. 3.

Mr. J. S. CLENDON, R.M., Whangarei, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department.

Sir,— Resident Magistrate's Office, Whangarei, 5th June, 1890.

In accordance with the request contained in your circular of the 12th May, 1890, relating to the state of the Native population within my district, I have the honour to remark, for the information of the Hon. the Native Minister, as follows:—

The Native population in the Kaipara, Whangarei, and part of the Auckland District under my supervision have for the past year chiefly employed themselves in gum-digging and in cultivating their lands.

From the gum industry they have "received" a considerable amount of profit, enabling them to live in an easier manner than they would otherwise have done had their means of subsistence been derived solely from their cultivations.

The timber industry being in a great measure at a standstill, very few Natives have engaged themselves in felling and squaring kauri timber.

The schools have been fairly attended, and in some instances scholars have attained a considerable amount of proficiency; but, as formerly reported, the parents' apathy and dislike to coerce their children has continuously exhibited the fact of a smaller attendance at the several schools than would have ensued had parental control been a firmer phase of the Native character.

Their general health has been exceedingly good; ten deaths have occurred during the past year; only a few cases of fever have developed, and the greater number of the deaths have been those of very old people.

During the period just concluding, the Natives have conducted themselves in a quiet and orderly manner, few disputes have occurred, and very few instances of crime been committed.

The desire for intoxicating liquor has decreased in a marked degree, hardly any cases of intoxication being now seen amongst them; and, in comparison with former years, drunkenness has become a thing of the past.

I have, &c.,

JAMES S. CLENDON, R.M.

No. 4.

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

Sir,— Native Office Otorohanga, 19th June, 1890.

In accordance with request contained in your Circular No. 7, of the 12th ultimo, I have the honour to forward herewith my annual report on the state of the Natives in my districts during the past year.

The delay in sending in this report has been caused by my having to go to the Thames in connection with land-purchase work.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CONDITION.

The health of the Natives throughout my districts—viz., Waikato, Waipa (King-country), and Thames-Hauraki—has been fairly good during the past year. They have, however, in common with Europeans, been attacked with the almost universal epidemic *la grippe*. Fortunately for them it was not of a very virulent type, otherwise they would have suffered more severely than they have done, as the absence of all sanitary laws in connection with their mode of living makes them an easy prey to epidemic sickness. One reason, perhaps, why they have not suffered severely from sickness of late years is because, now that they are fewer than they formerly were, they have ceased to herd together in large numbers in any particular settlement, as used to be the case in years past, but now they rather incline to live apart in isolated hapus or clans, here and there within the particular districts to which they belong. These remarks do not, of course, apply to Te Whiti's large settlement at Parihaka or to that of Tawhiao at Pukekawa; and it is worthy of remark that the only place that I have heard of where *la grippe*, with its attendant ailments, has really caused much loss of life is at the last-named settlement, ten Natives having died of it within a period of six weeks, which goes to show that, where Natives congregate together in considerable numbers for any length of time, they are very likely to contract sickness which under other circumstances they would not suffer from.

TEMPERANCE.

The Natives throughout my districts still keep up their name for temperance. With very few exceptions, and unless on special occasions, it is rather an unusual thing to see intoxicated Natives, and, when those who do indulge in an occasional "spree" get the worse for liquor, it is very rarely now that they commit themselves in such a way as to necessitate the interference of the police. It is quite natural that an increase of sobriety amongst them should result in a corresponding absence of crime, a fact which I am very glad to be able to report. There has been no crime of any magnitude committed by them during the past year, their offences against the law being mostly of a trivial nature, the most serious not exceeding the degree of larceny.

DEATHS.

Only three important chiefs, or men of mark, have died during the past year—viz., Wetere te Rerenga and Te Wiwini te Huatare (own brother to Wahanui), of Ngatimaniapoto, and Te Raihi Toroatai, of Ngatihaua. Both Wetere te Rerenga and Te Raihi were in receipt of Government pensions at the time of their death, and both were well known to the Europeans amongst whom they resided, more especially the former, whose name has often been before the public. On one occasion he was made notorious through being charged with having conspired to the murder of the Rev. Mr. Whiteley, at Whitecliffs, in 1869, and subsequently he appeared in a different and much more laudable role—namely, that of saving some Europeans from drowning who were capsized from

a canoe on the bar of Mokau River, for which meritorious act he received the bronze medal of the Royal Humane Society.

INDUSTRY.

The industry of the Natives in my districts, more especially in the Waikato and King-country, has been of rather a mixed kind during the past year. They have not paid much attention to food-production, merely growing enough for their own consumption, and in some cases not even that. There are a few instances where they have grown a little wheat or oats for sale to the local store-keepers, but they are isolated. Those who have had time at their disposal after attending the Land Court and the usual Native meetings have mostly turned their attention to two industries that have lately been introduced amongst them—viz., rabbit-killing and flax-cutting, out of which they have managed to get a rather precarious livelihood. Considerable sums have been paid to them by Government during the past year for rabbit-skins, as will no doubt be shown by the Rabbit Inspector's report. The rate of pay has been threepence per skin; it was reduced for a short time to twopence per skin, but, as the Natives refused to kill rabbits on those terms, it was raised again to threepence.

The great boom that took place a short time ago in flax caused several mills to be erected throughout the Waikato, Kawhia, and Raglan Districts, and also two at Otorohanga, thus giving almost constant employment to some of the Natives, who are adepts at flax-cutting, as well as being a source of revenue to the owners of flax-lands.

PUBLIC WORKS.

The only public work that has been undertaken in this district during the past year, in which Natives could participate, has been the making of a road from the lately-discovered beautiful limestone caves at Waitomo to Hangatiki, the nearest station to them on the Main Trunk Railway-line. The road is nearly six miles long, and has been laid off by and made under the supervision of Mr. C. W. Hursthouse, Government Engineer. The formation was let by contract in small sections to different parties of Natives, who, from the experience they gained whilst working on the railway-line during its formation in this district, are now very good road-makers. The aptitude and liking they have for this kind of work is almost surprising. They will desert food-cultivation, flax-cutting, or rabbit-killing for it. They take their contract sections at a lump sum previously fixed by the engineer in charge of works, and then go and camp alongside of their work with their wives and families, the women doing the cooking, washing, and getting firewood, whilst the men work early and late at their contract. Road-formation, or "*mahi-rori*," as the Natives call it, is a kind of labour that they prefer to all others.

THE GOVERNOR'S VISIT.

In the early part of April last the Natives living at Otorohanga were honoured by a visit from His Excellency the Governor and Lady Onslow, who were also accompanied by Sir Frederick Whitaker, the Hon. Mr. Mitchelson (Native Minister), the Mayor of Auckland, and others. His Excellency spent two days in the district, during which a trip was made to the Waitomo Caves. The Natives were extremely pleased to see His Excellency and Lady Onslow, but unfortunately the programme which was intended to be carried out in connection with the ceremonies of welcome, and which it was at first decided should consist of addresses of welcome by the principal chiefs, was slightly marred through a suggestion made at the last moment by some new arrivals who were more used to European customs than the local Natives—viz., that an address of welcome should be written out and signed by the principal chiefs, and then read out in Maori and English, and presented to His Excellency. This was done, but the chiefs who had signed the address got confused, and thought that nothing more was required of them but their presence at the presentation of the address to hear His Excellency's reply; hence their delay at getting up to address him at the public meeting in the Courthouse. When the matter was afterwards explained to them, they were most anxious to put themselves right with His Excellency, and several of the chiefs made personal explanations to him, and during the rest of his stay vied with each other in doing him honour.

After the meeting with His Excellency, the Hon. the Native Minister had a meeting with them, at which a number of matters which more or less affected their welfare were discussed, and they expressed themselves afterwards as highly pleased at the courteous manner and straightforward way in which he had dealt with the subjects laid before him.

NATIVE LAND COURT OPERATIONS.

The Native Land Court sat almost continuously during last year until the middle of December, when it adjourned and did not resume until the 20th of May. Since the commencement of the sitting of the Court for the investigation of title to land within the Rohepotae Block, or King-country, in July, 1886, the total area that has been adjudicated upon has been close upon 1,000,000 acres, represented by 136 separate blocks, with areas ranging from one acre to over 126,000 acres. Unfortunately, most of the blocks are of large area, and consequently the owners thereof are very numerous, amounting in one block of 135,000 acres to the enormous number of 991; another block has 523 owners; four blocks have over 300 owners, six have over 200 owners, eleven have over 150 owners, and fourteen have over 100 owners. Some of these blocks are subdivisions of what were originally much larger blocks, with even larger numbers of owners. The work of subdividing the large blocks is still going on, and it is to be hoped that, looking at the matter from the point of view of settlement of country by Europeans, before long the area and ownership of most of the blocks will be reduced to such dimensions as to make them easily attainable by transfer from the Native owners whenever the latter are willing to part with them.

Another matter that requires to be done before the blocks can be said to be in a state in which the owners can really benefit by the exchanging of the old Maori title for a Crown or a legal one is the defining of the interests of the numerous owners; until that is done, any distribution of money

in connection with them, be it purchase-money for the freehold, rent, goldfields revenue, or payment for timber or flax, will always be of an unsatisfactory nature and a fruitful source of dispute not only between Natives and Europeans, but also between the Natives themselves. It is well known that in most of the blocks the individual ownership of the grantees is not equal, some having, according to recognised Maori custom, much larger interests than others, but in the present state of the majority of the titles there is nothing to show who have the larger and who the smaller interests. The Court has, however, already told the Natives that, in the cases of all blocks that shall in the future be dealt with by it, those who are found to be the owners must, when sending in the list of names, fix the proportionate share of each in all cases where the shares are not equal, and in the cases of blocks already dealt with by the Court the owners have been asked to set about defining the individual interests as soon as possible; and, where they cannot come to any agreement themselves outside the Court, they have been told to bring the matter into Court for the Judge and Assessor to decide. Judge Mair, who commenced the adjudication of Rohepotae titles four years ago, is still the Judge, and he still has Paratene Ngata with him as Native Assessor.

GOVERNMENT LAND PURCHASE.

At the beginning of the present year Government commenced its endeavours to secure by purchase some of the blocks that have now been adjudicated upon within the Rohepotae Block, but up to the present very little progress has been made, as the Natives, with very few exceptions indeed, have shown a decided disinclination to sell. The truth of the saying "that it takes two to make a bargain" is as apparent in Native-land-purchase operations as in other matters, and, notwithstanding that the desire of Government (or any one) be ever so great to acquire land by purchase, unless the owners of the land can be got to reciprocate that feeling, and the desire becomes mutual that the ownership of the land shall change, very little progress can be made in land-purchase. Up to the present time very few of the Rohepotae owners have evinced such a desire. The offer of 3s. 6d. and 5s. per acre (according to quality and position of land), with 10 per cent. out of each block returned as reserves, has not, so far, proved sufficiently tempting. The reason of this objection to sell arises from several causes: one, and it may be called the real reason, is that they are not really in want of money just now. Maoris hardly ever sell land through feelings of sentiment. The argument about the benefit that European settlement and enterprise in their midst will be to them is paid little heed to. They think they see that we are not really so disinterested as we would make it appear to them, and that, with perhaps the exception of providing schools for the education of their children, we seldom want to do anything which will be of benefit to them, unless we have discovered that benefit or profit will in the first instance be reaped by us, or that it is equally for our good as well as theirs that the result we strive for should be brought about. Hence, they consider the reason why we desire to get them to assist us in bringing about certain results, and they generally manage, if possible, when that is the case, that we shall pay for the privilege of enjoying the profits or advantages of such results. There is a considerable amount of human nature in this, and also a great deal of smartness or business-acumen, which goes abundantly to prove that the Maori of the present day is able to take care of himself and look after his own interests. The above position can, however, only be taken up by those Maoris who can afford to wait: once let them be really in want of money and then, like many Europeans when placed in the same circumstances, they will sell at almost any price; this will, I think, be the case when their source of revenue from the sale of flax and flax-cutting, also the sale of rabbit-skins and payment for road-making, ceases. Another reason why they refuse to sell at present is that they consider the prices offered by the Government are too small, and they could get more if they were allowed to sell to private purchasers. A proposal is talked about by a few at the present time to get up a petition to Government requesting that the proclamation over the King country, which gives the Government the sole right of purchase, be removed, and that free-trade in land-purchase be allowed. It is useless to tell them that private purchasers would probably give a little more per acre if allowed to purchase small areas, and in the best localities, that is, to "pick the eyes," as it is called, out of the blocks, and leave the Natives with the balance of the land on their hands, useless and unsaleable; they think differently.

There is another matter that has an important bearing in connection with land-purchase operations at present, and which is, perhaps as much as anything else, the cause of retarding them. It is a fact that a number of the owners have taken to sheep-grazing. During the past two or three years a few intelligent and industrious half-castes at Kopua, near Alexandra, have done very well by purchasing a few sheep, grazing them on the large area of waste land in the locality owned by them in conjunction with other members of their tribe, and disposing of the wool and lambs at the proper season. News of their success soon travelled through the whole of the Ngatimaniapoto and Ngatiraukawa districts, the profits being most likely very much exaggerated, whilst the losses and the care and attention required in looking after the sheep were possibly very much underrated, if considered at all. The result is that there is now a craze throughout the district for sheep-grazing, and I think there are now fully six thousand sheep grazing within the Rohepotae Block. They are owned mostly by the Natives, but in one or two cases Europeans have joined them in the speculation, the latter finding the sheep in the first instance, which they hand over to the Natives, who place them upon the land, the payment to the Europeans being a proportion of either lambs or wool, or both, as the case may be. Under this condition of affairs, and whilst the result of the sheep-speculation is in abeyance, those Natives who are concerned in it can hardly be expected to be prevailed upon to dispose of their lands. Some of them anticipate making large profits out of the venture, and talk of being able to pay all the costs incurred for the survey of their lands, as well as the Native Land Court fees, out of the sale of the wool and lambs. I have my doubts, however, about the success of the venture, and, unless the Natives exercise great care and supervision, and are fortunate in having a mild winter, it is very likely that they will lose a number of their sheep through scarcity of food and exposure. Then there are the depredations of the large number of dogs that always infest Native settlements to take into consideration; and last, but not

least, the voracity of the half-starved pigs with which the country abounds, and which are said to follow the sheep about for the purpose of devouring the lambs as soon as they are dropped.

I think I see in this sheep-speculation an element of dispute and quarelling amongst the Natives themselves, which is sure to cause dissension. Of course, all the owners of the land are not also owners of sheep, and those who are not fortunate enough to own any sheep are already complaining of the sheep-owners running their sheep over the whole of the block, and not considering them at all. This will lead to dissension, and it is very likely that, if those who have no sheep find that they cannot stop those who have from running them over the whole block, or get them to pay for such a privilege, they will sell their interests out of pique, in order to annoy the others.

Negotiations are said to have been in progress by Europeans during the past few weeks for the purchase of the kahikatea timber-bushes near Otorohanga and Hangatiki. Several European names have been mentioned in connection therewith, but nothing definite is known yet. There is also a rumour of one European being about to erect a saw-mill at Otorohanga, which, if he does, will, I think, clearly constitute "occupation," which is prohibited by "The Native Lands Frauds Prevention Act 1881 Amendment Act, 1888." Possibly, he considers that as no action was taken by Government against those who, a few months ago, erected flax-mills on Native land at Otorohanga, his saw-mill, if erected, will not be interfered with.

To a close observer the owners of Rohepotae or King-country Block have shown some peculiarly-marked features since they separated themselves from the King party in 1882; not the least of which is that almost every step they have taken since then has, until lately, always been of a unanimous nature and in concert, and there has been a clearly-defined interval between each step or stage, so much so that it may not inaptly be compared to the distinct markings, or strata, by which the geologist determines the period of our earth's existence, and can tell the forms of life that existed during each. Starting from the time when the Waikato war ended up to, say, 1880-81, they were in a disorganized, or what, perhaps, may be called a chaotic, state. Their first step in the new order of things was to separate themselves from the Waikatos and the King party, which they did by laying down the external boundaries of the land claimed by them, which they called "Rohepotae," surveying the same and proclaiming it to be owned by the five tribes—Ngatimaniapoto, Ngatiraukawa, Ngatiwhakarete, Ngatihikairo, and Whanganui. Having done this, they thought, at that time, that that was all that was necessary, and that they would thereafter be acknowledged as the owners by European law and the Government. This, however, they found could not be done until they had proved their title to the land in the Native Land Court, which they had to do, though much against their wish at first, as, although they wanted to be recognised as owners by us, they did not want to give themselves so much, as they thought, into our hands as to allow their land to be dealt with by a tribunal of our instituting, called the Native Land Court. This was the second stage. The third stage—and it was almost contemporary with the second—was allowing the railway-line to run through their country. This was agreed to by them after due consideration and deliberation as a body; and most likely what helped them considerably to come to such a decision was the fact that they could see that Government were determined to put it through. Having put their land through the Court in one large block, in accordance with the survey of the external boundaries, it became necessary for them to send in the name of each individual who had ownership to it. This they objected to for a long time, and wanted it awarded to tribes and hapus only, and not to individuals. This was for the purpose of preventing sales, &c., and to keep the power in the hands of the chiefs. But as the Court had no power to do this they had to send in the names of individuals, and here commenced the jealousy, ill-feeling, bickerings, and quarrelling that finally resulted in their subdividing the original large block, with over four thousand five hundred owners, into numerous small blocks, with separate lists of owners for each. This subdividing of the large block, and deciding the ownership of the minor blocks, may be called the fifth stage, and there they hoped and tried hard to stop, as the next or sixth stage meant surveying the boundaries of each block as defined by the Court, and this they objected in many cases to do, as they saw plainly that, as soon as that was done and the area known, there was nothing to prevent those of the owners from selling who wanted to do so, a proceeding that it was almost unanimously considered should not be allowed if it could possibly be avoided. A strong effort was also made at the time to keep the Government from getting a hold upon the land by survey lien or otherwise, and when they found that it was absolutely necessary that the surveys should be made—if not, all the previous work of the Native Land Court would be of no avail—they at first endeavoured to make arrangements with private surveyors to do the work and wait until the Natives could subscribe amongst themselves, or by other means get together the money to pay them. Eventually, however, they allowed the work to be done by the Government, as it was pointed out to them that it would be done with greater accuracy and quite as cheap that way. This is now being done, and the seventh or last stage is now being entered upon—namely, parting with their land by sale. As I have shown, they have, from the commencement, entered upon each successive stage with reluctance and with as much delay as possible, and it is only in keeping with all their previous action that they should show as much reluctance and cause as much delay in bringing about this seventh and last stage as they have done in all the others. But this delay is only temporary, and this reluctance will gradually wear off and pass away. Numerous elements, the greatest of which is jealousy, are now at work amongst them, and which ere long will bring about a complete disintegration of their policy of anti-land-selling. What is wanted is to be prepared to act promptly, and take advantage of the disintegration as soon as it takes place.

Tawhiao and his few remaining supporters still reside at Pukekawa, near Mercer. He had his usual annual meeting this year, and there were some 1,500 Natives present, including representatives from different parts of the North Island. Nothing, however, of importance was done, and most of the visitors admit that they attended the meeting more out of curiosity than anything else. With the exception of an occasional outburst of zeal on the part of some enthusiastic supporter, the King movement and party seem to be getting yearly less and less.

There is one matter in connection with it, however, that sometimes causes trouble, more especially within the Waikato district. It is the action of what are called "King committees" in the districts where some of his supporters live. These committees are generally self-appointed, one of their number acting as magistrate or judge, who professes to deal with all matters that may be brought before him in the same way as do our Resident Magistrates' Courts. The fact of one of the parties to a suit not acknowledging his power or jurisdiction, and not attending his court, makes no difference to him. He simply hears the one side that appears before him, and gives judgment accordingly; and if the losing side object, and take no notice of the judgment, Native constables are then sent to enforce it by seizing horses, cattle, or chattels, as the case may be, which the "judge" sells by auction to satisfy the judgment and pay the court-fees and expenses. This would be all very well if they confined their operations to themselves, that is, to those who are followers of Tawhiao; but when they summon Natives who do not acknowledge their right to do so, and because they do not attend court go and seize their property and sell it, trouble is likely to ensue. In several cases the sufferers have had recourse to the European Resident Magistrate's Court for redress, and the offenders have mostly been ordered to return any property they may have seized, which order is very seldom carried out, and it becomes difficult and expensive to proceed in the matter in our Court beyond that stage. The offenders know this, and it gives them courage to continue their action. It is a pity that offenders of this class could not be made to suffer in pocket or in person for acts of this sort, because such conduct is very annoying, and likely to lead to trouble.

NATIVE SCHOOLS.

All the Native schools in my districts, with the exception of the one at Te Kopua, are in a fairly flourishing condition. One reason this one does not succeed is because no provision has yet been made for bridging two creeks that have to be crossed by the children before they can get to the school; another reason is that the new school which has lately started at Otorohanga has taken some of the children who used to attend the Kopua school. Since my last report another Native school has been started in the King-country—viz., at Otorohanga. The attendance at present is only about forty children, but it is expected to increase.

RELIGION.

Almost the only religion professed by the Natives throughout the Waikato and King-country is that which is being promulgated by the Mormon elders and teachers who have now been living for several years amongst them. The objections raised against these people in America and elsewhere cannot apply to New Zealand, for, so far as I have been able to see, whatever was objectionable in their religion and practices there has not been introduced here. The result of their teachings amongst the Maoris has certainly been good. One reason why these people and their teachings have found favour with the Maoris is because of their evident sincerity, their humility, the cheerfulness with which they put up with hardship, and the readiness with which they adapt themselves to the Maori style of living. They also practice themselves what they teach to others, and they strictly carry out the Scripture injunction to carry neither purse nor scrip. They never make collections, or ask for money; neither do they seek to acquire land, nor mix themselves up in any matters that do not belong to their particular sphere. No wonder, then, that the Maoris become converts to their teachings. Maoris, as a rule, are very discerning, and also very good judges of character, and they evidently appreciate the disinterestedness of the Mormon teachers now working amongst them. Maoris never cared for, or understood much about, our distinctions between different creeds, sects, doctrines, and dogmas; and the importance with which some of us treat these matters, to the exclusion sometimes of the true elements of Christianity, makes the Maori wonder whether the religion that we have been trying for years to get him to adopt is really religion in its strictest sense, and whether, if to adopt it would cause them to act as we sometimes do, they would not be as well without it. The theology of the Maori does not represent the numerous phases that it does with us; but when they find any one putting up with personal loss and discomfort all for the purpose of doing them good, and that without expectation of any earthly fee or reward, they at first view him as a curiosity, after that, if he proves to be genuine, they believe in him, and become converts to his teachings. A considerable number of Natives in both the Thames and Te Aroha districts have now adopted the Mormon faith.

OBSTRUCTION TO SURVEYS.

The Piako Natives, within the Thames district, have lately caused some trouble by refusing to allow a surveyor to erect a trig. station at one of their settlements on the Piako River known as Te Kerepechi. I was about proceeding there to try and arrange the matter during a visit I made to the Thames a short time ago, but just before starting I received instructions not to go, as the Surveyor-General had decided to take the steps provided by law to punish any person who destroys survey-marks, or obstructs surveyors whilst carrying out their work when armed with the necessary authority.

I have, &c.,

GEORGE T. WILKINSON,

Government Native Agent and Land-purchase Officer.

The Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

No. 5.

Mr. R. S. BUSH, R.M., Tauranga, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Resident Magistrate's Office, Tauranga, 5th June, 1890.

I have the honour, in furnishing the following report on the Natives in the district under my control, to state that it refers to and includes all the Natives from Tauranga to Cape Runaway, also those in the Thermal district of Rotorua and Taupo, and the Urewera Country. The Native population of these localities numbers between 8,000 and 9,000 persons.

The conduct of the Natives throughout the whole of the districts during the past year has been unexceptionally good. Comparatively speaking, very few cases of drunkenness and disorderly behaviour have been dealt with at the various Courts. No offences of a serious nature have taken place, and the Natives generally have appeared to indulge less in intoxicants, except those about Rotorua, in whom, I regret to say, I see no improvement during the past twelve months. These Natives have been better supplied with money this year than for some years past, owing to the increased tourist-traffic and the sale of their township to the Crown. Several of the vendors of the township placed the bulk of their money in the Post Office Savings-bank; a considerable amount was also spent in purchasing agricultural implements, carts and horses, and bullock-teams; a large sum also was expended in clothing.

The health of the Natives during the past year has been fairly good, quite equal to that of previous years. No serious disease in an epidemic form has occurred until recently, when the severe influenza colds which have been so prevalent throughout New Zealand put in an appearance amongst them, so far, without any very serious results. Only one Native school has been temporarily closed—namely, that at Galatea, which is a very cold bleak region, and where, I fear, the children are very poorly clothed.

A considerable quantity of grain has been cultivated in the Bay of Plenty, in the shape of wheat about Tauranga, and maize at Opotiki, Whakatane, and the eastern portion of the Bay. The two steamers "Chelmsford" and "Douglas" have been fully engaged conveying maize from Opotiki and Whakatane during the past year, a fair portion of which is produced by the Natives. The grain carried by the steamers is not grown further east than Torere, all the produce beyond that is shipped away in schooners. It is anticipated that this season's maize-crop at Opotiki and Whakatane will yield at least 50,000 sacks. The wheat grown in Tauranga and vicinity has been considerably in excess of last year's crop, and the yield and price realised have been encouraging to the growers. The Natives residing in the Lake district, at Maketu, and Matata scarcely grow sufficient for their own wants. This, in a measure, may be attributed to the poorness of the soil and their want of industry.

The flax-industry has caused the erection of several mills at Te Puke, Maketu, and Matata, which find employment for many Natives, a great number of whom are availing themselves of the opportunity thus afforded them to utilise the flax growing in the vicinity of their settlements. The unfortunate part of such industries to the Native is that, as a rule, it furnishes a ready excuse to neglect his cultivations, and, in many instances, enables them to eke out an existence without cultivating at all; hence they do not derive the same advantage that they would if they were more prudent; and I fear if the price of flax fell, and the mills were compelled to cease work, the Natives would probably find themselves badly off for provisions.

Nothing has occurred during the past year to cause any unusual excitement in any part of the district; in no year during the last ten have Native matters been so quiet as during this. It is to be hoped that this augurs that the Natives have now settled down in real earnest to agricultural pursuits.

A considerable number of Natives from Tauranga and Maketu proceeded to Waikato to attend Tawhiao's meeting recently held there. The meeting appears to have been little more than an ordinary Native gathering, at which nothing of importance was done. It seems to have been nothing more than one of those periodical Native assemblages which the Natives are so fond of, and which possess great attractions to the Native mind. It is, however, a matter for congratulation to find that even these meetings are getting fewer in number in most Native districts; it is to be hoped the time is not far distant when they will become a thing of the past, as they are most pernicious to the welfare of the Maori.

The eighteen Native schools in the district have been well attended during the year, and considerable progress has been made by the scholars attending. In nearly the whole of them great interest is taken by Natives residing in the vicinity of the schools, and, as a rule, the parents attend the Inspector's and District Superintendent's visits. Great interest is taken by the parents in the periodical examinations by the Inspector, when the parents anxiously look forward to hear the results, in the hope that their school has excelled those at other settlements in the matter of standard passes. Wherever the resident Natives take this interest in the school, an excellent and well-attended school is always found. There are, however, a few settlements where the parents do not give their school that amount of support, consequently these schools are less successful and not so regularly attended; but, fortunately, this want of interest is an exception, and generally met with in those localities where the Native population are adherents of Te Kooti. Perhaps the object is to keep the rising generation in these places ignorant, so that they may the more readily be made to adhere to the Kootiite doctrines. I know of no other reason why a want of interest should exist in such settlements. It is found nowhere except amongst Te Kootiites; hence the objection of the Urewera to establish schools in their territory.

The most important occurrence of the year within these districts has been the purchase of the Rotorua lands from the Ngatiwhakaue Tribe. These difficult negotiations were satisfactorily completed by the Hon. the Native Minister and the Under-Secretary of the Native Department. The Arawa Tribe as a whole, but particularly the Ngatiwhakaue section of that people, have always been known as a difficult people to deal with. Many obstacles had to be surmounted in the negotiations for the above lands, which, after many discussions, were overcome, and resulted in the Crown becoming the purchasers of the lands.

The district land-purchases have been carried on by me; a considerable area has been acquired in various blocks; but shares in these purchases are not coming in very rapidly just now, chiefly owing to the want of successors, a number of the original owners having died and no successors having been appointed. This difficulty, however, will be removed after a sitting of the Native Land Court is held here, which, I understand, will shortly take place.

No public works have been undertaken by the Natives since the last report. Two cases of supposed leprosy were reported, which the Natives attributed to *maku*tu, or witchcraft, but which,

upon examination by the local medical practitioner, were pronounced in the one case to be the effects of syphilis, and in the other a combination of scrofula and syphilis, not contagious or infectious.

I have, &c.,

The Under Secretary, Native Department,
Wellington.

R. S. BUSH,
Resident Magistrate.

No. 6.

Captain PREECE, R.M., Napier, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Resident Magistrate's Office, Napier, 26th June, 1890.

In accordance with the instructions contained in your Circular No. 7, of the 12th ultimo, I beg to forward the following report of the state of the Natives in the district under my charge :—

NAPIER DISTRICT.

Very large quantities of grain have been grown by the Natives in the several settlements. The crops have been unusually good. I think that Native crops should be recognised in the agricultural statistics, otherwise the district does not get credit for all grain and other crops grown therein. The Natives grow by far the largest amount of wheat produced in the district, and a fair quantity of oats and potatoes. A great number of Natives have, as usual, been employed in shearing. This work attracts a number of Natives from other tribes during the season, especially the Urewera Tribe, who now visit the district every season for the purpose of getting employment.

The case reported last year, in which Watara-wi was charged with shooting Turanga Karauria, was tried in the Supreme Court at Wellington, in November last, when the offender was convicted of manslaughter, and sentenced to penal servitude for ten years.

The Native Land Court has been sitting almost continuously at Hastings since July last, and has adjudicated on the long-standing Omaha dispute, and has subdivided the land between the parties found to be entitled thereto. The case lasted, with short intervals, from July to February, and judgment was given by Judges O'Brien and Von Stürmer on the 13th February, after a very patient and exhaustive hearing. I understand, however, that an application for a rehearing has been made. The Court has lately been sitting on the subdivision of the Mangaohane Block, and the contending parties have arrived at an amicable settlement of the case, thereby saving the Court considerable trouble, and themselves trouble and expense.

The number of cases heard in the Resident Magistrate's Court at Napier, Hastings, Waipawa, Ormondville, and Woodville, in which Maoris were concerned, were as follows: Civil cases—European plaintiffs, Maori defendants, 104; amount sued for, £1,645 17s. 8d.; amount recovered, £1,365 1s. 8d. Maori plaintiffs, European defendants, 7; amount sued for, £119 0s. 2d.; amount recovered, £67 18s. 6d. Maori plaintiffs, Maori defendants, 3; amount sued for, £56; amount recovered, £8 8s. Criminal cases: Murder, committed for trial, 2; forcible entry, committed for trial, 2; wilful damage, dismissed, 4; wilful damage, convicted, 2; Police Offences Act, convicted, 3; cruelty to animals, convicted, 1; Public Works Act, convicted, 4; drunkenness, convicted, 6; drunkenness, dismissed, 3; lunacy, discharged, 1.

One of the prisoners committed for murder was Makoare Wata, for the murder of Mr. Robert Gollan, at Te Mahia. He was tried in September at the Supreme Court, convicted, and sentenced to death, which sentence was carried into effect at the Napier Gaol in due course. The other case was that of Watara-wi, who was subsequently tried in Wellington, and convicted of manslaughter. I may state that, with the exception of these two cases, there have been no serious cases against Natives.

The general health of the Natives has been good; there has been no epidemic amongst them except the influenza, which is now prevalent throughout the district amongst Europeans and Natives. I regret to report the death of the chiefs Te Meihana Takihi and Paoro Torotoro.

WAIROA DISTRICT.

The Natives in this district have been, as usual, very well behaved; they have been employed shearing during the season, and have about the average quantity of land under cultivation, which has yielded 2,300 bushels of wheat, 4,500 bushels of maize, and 2,500 bushels of oats. There has not been much success in whaling at the Mahia, only seven whales were caught, the value of the oil being £180.

In the Resident Magistrate's Court the following cases were heard: European plaintiffs, Maori defendants, 35; amount sued for, £139 19s. 9d.; amount recovered, £139 4s. 10d. Maori plaintiffs, European defendants, 2; amount sued for, £59; amount recovered, £11 9s. Maori plaintiffs, Maori defendants, 7; amount sued for, £72 12s. 5d.; amount recovered, £25 1s. 4d.

GENERAL REMARKS.

A number of cases which were heard in the Native Land Court last year still remain unsettled, as rehearings have been applied for in nearly all the cases heard.

With regard to the conduct of the Natives it has been generally very good. The evidence against Makoare Wata, who was executed for the murder of Robert Gollan, was principally that of Natives, who gave every assistance to the authorities in bringing the offender to justice.

I have, &c.,

The Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

GEORGE A. PREECE,
Resident Magistrate.

No. 7.

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

New Plymouth, 30th May, 1890.

SIR,—

I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 12th instant, and to report that there is no material change in the state of this district so far as the Natives are concerned during the past year, as they have generally been living quietly on their own lands, and have not resumed the continual wandering about of former years to Parihaka and elsewhere. Te Whiti himself has served a period of imprisonment for contempt of Court since my last annual report. He had got into debt a few years back to a storekeeper, and was summoned before the Resident Magistrate's Court for the amount of his debt. When the case came off, Te Whiti did not appear, and it went by default. The creditor waited some time, and tried all reasonable means to recover, and offered to accept a lesser amount, I believe, than he got a verdict for, but, finding he could not get anything, at length applied for a judgment summons, when again Te Whiti did not appear. An order was then made that he should pay within a certain time, or go to prison for three months. Te Whiti took no notice, and was imprisoned accordingly. Unfortunately, whilst serving his sentence his wife died. After his release he stayed a few days near New Plymouth, at a Native village, and then returned to Parihaka.

I have not heard that anything remarkable took place there after his return. There is a Native village called Pumiho, about seven miles north of Parihaka, where a kind of rival prophet, called Motu lived, with a small following. He never went to Parihaka through all the years of large gatherings and excitement there, but since Te Whiti's imprisonment for debt, he (Motu) has cast in his lot with the Parihaka people, and has abandoned his own independent rôle.

A mild outbreak of superstition has occurred in the Rahotu district. A number of deaths took place amongst the Native children there, more particularly those of a chief called Te Kahui, who is perfectly convinced, as is also his wife, that the deaths were the result of witchcraft; and one of their relatives dreamt that the cause lay in a bewitched stone buried by an enemy close to the threshold of the house Te Kahui lived in, and that as the children went in and out of the house they had to walk over the spot where the stone lay buried, and the tapu thus passed into the children's bodies and caused illness which ended fatally. As the result of the dream, search was made, and the Natives say a stone was dug up at the spot indicated, which exhibited signs of blood on being exposed to the air. The house was deserted, and another of the children who was ill at the time was brought into town and placed under medical advice, but the child died, as European doctors have no power to save where Maori witchcraft exists. (The unbelieving pakeha doctors lay the death down to more natural causes.)

Two Natives, I think Waikatos, who were reported as specially endowed with power to discover hidden witchcraft, were invited to visit Rahotu, and they there unearthed a number of similarly tapued stones, which they declared to have been the cause of the numerous fatalities amongst the children. These stones were burnt with ceremony, and this was supposed to remove the witchcraft. This is by no means a new idea, as on looking over the records of the Native Office, numerous reports will be found about the doings of the stone-digging gentry.

In my last annual report I stated that Hone Pihama was the only stipendiary Assessor left in the district, and that he was ailing. Since then he has died. He has not for several years taken any active part in matters on this coast owing to his illness, and the only influence he retained was what attached to his name, but some years ago he was one of the most influential of the few chiefs who held aloof from Te Whitiism. Rumour says he became a convert before he died. His wife and children gave in their adherence to Parihaka years ago.

The general health of the Natives has been much about the average of last year. They seem to me to have been a little more industrious, but I fear it is only in fits and starts, and that steady work as practised by Europeans is out of the question so far as the present generation is concerned. Neither do they seem to appreciate the benefits of the free education which they could have for their children, as but few of the Native race are to be found in the schools of this district.

On the whole, I have not much change to report for better or worse; but I again repeat an opinion that their numbers are diminishing through a more than average mortality and paucity of births.

A strong desire is felt amongst the Natives of this district to be allowed to deal with their lands themselves, but as a large part of these lands are let through the Public Trustee to Europeans, and as some of the grants contain as many as two hundred owners, it will be found difficult to give the Natives the power they desire, and at the same time to protect the interests of the majority of the grantees. The real remedy, in my opinion, is thorough partition of the lands by the Native Land Court, and then removing the restrictions, so that each Native could lease or sell his superfluous defined land to European settlers.

The Under-Secretary, Native Department,
Wellington.

I have, &c.,
W. RENNELL,
Reserves Trustee.

[Approximate Cost of Paper.—Preparation, nil; printing (1,350 copies), £5 14s.]

By Authority: GEORGE DIDSBUY, Government Printer, Wellington.—1890.

