

No. 4.

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

SIR,—

New Plymouth, 8th June, 1892.

In reply to your letter of 26th May last, I have the honour to state that I am not aware of any matter of special consequence that has taken place amongst the Natives of my district during this last year.

They are cultivating quietly, in much about the usual manner, on the different lands reserved for them along the coast.

I notice that in the southern end of my district, say from Manutahi to Waitotara, a move amongst the Natives towards a general return to the Christian religion has taken place, several substantial wooden churches having been built in different places, and the drinking habits of the Natives have, as a consequence, very much decreased during the last year or two. This is, I think, to be attributed to the personal influence of those clergymen who have devoted their energies specially to this subject in that district.

Education is neglected by the Natives to a great extent, about forty of their children attending school in the Taranaki educational district, and under twenty in the Wanganui educational district north of Waitotara, or a total of sixty Native and half-caste children attending school between White Cliffs and Waitotara; but even this is an improvement on what it was a few years ago.

The health of the Natives has been much about the average during the last year. In places a number of the old people have died off, but generally there has been no severe sickness or mortality.

I am told, as a curious fact, by a gentleman well acquainted with the district surrounding Parihaka, that at a Native village called Puniho, where about forty Natives reside, more Native children have been born during the last year or two than for a long time previously, and he attributes it to the more regular, steady habits adopted by these Natives.

As a rule, however, my opinion has not altered from that given in previous years, that the Native race is decreasing from high mortality and low birth-rate—this being so far as my own observation goes.

I have, &c.,

W. RENNELL,

The Acting Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

Reserves Trustee.

No. 5.

Mr. A. TURNBULL, R.M., Napier, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Resident Magistrate's Office, Napier, 14th June, 1892.

As requested by your Circular No. 7, of 27th May, 1892, I have now the honour to report as follows on the state of the Natives in the Napier district:—

The Natives still continue peaceable, there having been no disturbance between themselves during the past year, although in June last a disturbance was feared in connection with the long-pending Omaha dispute. One of the parties, however, applied to the Supreme Court at that time to restrain the other from assuming undisputed right over the land in dispute, when an order was made restraining all parties from asserting any rights of ownership over the land until the application for a rehearing was heard. Such application came on at Hastings before the Chief Judge and Pepene Eketore, Native Assessor, in October last, and a rehearing was granted on the 15th December, 1891. The rehearing took place during the months of March and April last, and a final decision was given by the Chief Judge and Judge Scannell on the 5th ultimo.

In addition to the sittings at Hastings, the Native Land Court has also sat almost continuously at Waipawa and Danevirke during the past year, adjudicating on the Waikopiro, Mangatoro, Rakautatahi, and Ngapaeruru Blocks.

Negotiations have been entered into by the Government for the purchase of the Waikopiro Blocks, and up to the present time about twenty interests have been purchased. These negotiations have been carried on by Mr. Kelly, the Assistant Land-purchase Officer, also Native Interpreter, attached to this office, and, so far as I can judge, have been fairly successful.

The general state of health among the Natives continues good, and calls for no special remark. The only death of any note amongst them happened lately, namely, that of the loyal old chief Paora Kaiwhata, who, I am informed, was one of the friendly chiefs, and rendered the Government much assistance during the war. His funeral took place on the 27th ultimo, at Moteo, at which Mr. Kelly was present to represent the Native Department.

In the Trust Commissioners' Court there have been 144 transactions inquired into under "The Native Lands Frauds' Prevention Act, 1881," and its amendments, and in most instances I have examined the Natives interested personally. These examinations have taken place at Napier and Waipawa, and also at other places, when engaged on my magisterial duties, though in a few cases I have made special visits for the purpose. I may here state that I have endeavoured, as far as practicable, to get all deeds executed and the matter completed in my presence, so that I may have a better opportunity of inquiring into and judging as to the *bona fides* of the transactions. I understand that this course gives satisfaction to the parties interested, and at the same time saves the expense of bringing the Natives again to town when the hearing of the application for a certificate comes on.

The Natives at the various settlements continue to cultivate and farm as usual, and have had fairly good crops this season, but I have been unable to get any details as to the kind or amount of