

122. Yes, we have about three hundred there?—Yes, and they have their wives and children there.

123. You do not infer that the Natives are below the average in intelligence? Do you think they would express a fair opinion upon any question submitted to them?—Well, up to the present they have had no right.

124. Do you think they are capable of expressing an opinion, Yes or No, if you give them the right to judge as to the best man to represent them in Parliament? Do you think they are competent to express an opinion upon the licensing question?—Well, you do not give them manhood suffrage, and place them on an equality with whites in other matters.

125. But, seeing that they have this right to elect their members, are they sufficiently intelligent to express an opinion: have they the knowledge of right or wrong (for their interest or against) to have the liquor in the King-country?—Yes, I think so.

126. You think they are competent to say if they should have licenses or not?—Yes, I think so; but I do not know why the Natives of the King-country should be picked out and treated differently in this matter.

127. We are only speaking of the locality from which you come. You do not know if the Natives in your own district consider they are competent to exercise a judicious vote upon this question? It is not a question of giving licenses, it is whether they are capable of expressing an intelligent opinion upon the question?—Yes, I think so. I think Maoris of the King-country are capable of expressing an intelligent opinion upon the question; they are exceptionally intelligent.

128. You would say the same of the European population, who represent about the same number?—Yes, I would say so.

129. We have only three hundred there?—I thought you had about four hundred. With women and children that would bring it up to a thousand, together with those employed by the Roads Department?

130. Do you think they are men of intelligence, who would express an opinion which they considered in the interest of the district?—I have already said that if a vote was taken they would be favourable to the introduction of liquor.

131. You desire to alter the present state of affairs: you are not satisfied with the present state of affairs?—No.

132. Do you know what has been done?—Yes.

133. Inspector Cullen is a capable officer?—He has done more than any one else.

134. He has taken effective steps to prevent the sale of sly-grog?—Well, not very effectively.

135. He has taken every reasonable precaution to prevent the sale of sly-grog?—Well, just at present the police are very active. Just lately thirty-three summonses have been issued for sly-grog selling; about a month previous, fifty.

136. There were some cases three years ago?—Yes, and there have been some since, but more recently.

137. You say this has a deterrent effect on the sale of sly-grog?—Undoubtedly.

138. Have you any suggestions to make as to how the working-methods should be improved?—Yes; I have already stated that the buyer should be equally fined with the seller, and the taking of liquor for sale into the country should be prohibited.

139. Do you think, assuming it is a question for the people living in the district to decide, to have a certain number of houses under restriction and supervision and so on, would be better as compared with the present system?—Yes, it would be very effectual if conducted under a proper system, such as the Gothenburg.

140. You refer to drinking among the Natives when the Land Court was sitting?—Yes; I have several times seen the Land Court stop sitting because practically all Maoris interested were drunk in Kihikihi; that is where the Land Court started, outside the King-country. I am speaking of twelve years ago.

141. At the present time is that the case?—No; at that time the railway had just started, and the navy was there as well.

142. That was twelve years ago, and, apparently, the administration of the law has stopped that?—No; as the work extended the navy went away.

143. You consider him to have been the cause of the drinking?—Yes, largely.

144. I am not, myself, acquainted with the boundaries of the King-country, but the difficulty of preventing liquor from coming over what you call the frontier would be very great?—Undoubtedly.

145. You say sly-grog selling is decreasing now?—Yes; things are not so bad as they were.

146. Do you think it could be reasonably expected that it could be stopped?—I think a more determined attempt could be made to stop it.

147. What methods would you adopt to stop it?—Preventing liquor from coming into the country. I would not think it advisable to stop people getting it up for personal consumption, but not for other purposes. I would limit the amount. People could take in a certain amount for their own consumption.

148. *The Chairman.*] You know Captain Jackson, Mr. Dyer, and Mr. Wilkinson: well, I suppose they have been a good deal through the King-country?—Captain Jackson has been up to one or two Old-age Pension Courts. I do not know that Mr. Dyer has actually been in the King-country. He lived in Kihikihi for a time.

149. You stated just now that if the people had a vote they would vote for the introduction of liquor; do you mean they would vote for Government control?—Yes; I mean that they would vote for such control.

150. Would vote for control?—Yes; I am quite satisfied on that.

151. Do you know of your own knowledge that the Native population are anxious for