

concerned, at which the Resident Magistrate attends, when the merits of the case are discussed and conciliatory measures proposed. Such cases are sometimes difficult to deal with, requiring no small amount of patience in carrying them through, especially if the cause of dispute should happen to be a kauri gum field or a valuable block of timber land. The Natives, however, are generally open to reason, and by a careful handling of the questions at issue, the causes for irritation have been removed, and satisfactory arrangements made. This mode of settling their grievances is now substituted for the old system of *taua*, or raid upon any party charged with an offence, followed by an indiscriminate plunder of property or a declaration of open warfare.

The physical condition of the Natives has improved: sickness has been less prevalent, and those attacked for the most part better able to combat with disease. Scrofula has almost entirely disappeared from amongst them. These favourable circumstances may be traced to improved diet, better homesteads, and warmer clothing. All are not now content to live in the miserable hovels they once occupied. Many inhabit respectable wooden cottages, and the adoption of European diet and clothing is becoming general; but, as a people, they are sadly wanting in personal cleanliness.

Drunkness, which at one time threatened the destruction of the race, is by no means so general as formerly, and although amongst some it is still carried on to a great extent, yet an improvement is visible. Many could be named, once notorious drunkards, who have become total abstainers, amongst them chiefs of rank, who, for the good of their people, have forbidden the introduction of spirits into their villages, the people on their part readily complying with the wishes of their chiefs. One peculiarity in the Maori is the absence of that wretched craving for intoxicating liquor which characterizes the European drunkard. Those of the Maoris who give way to this vice will some of them drink to an incredible degree even for days together, but when their debauchery is over they will return to their usual avocations without manifesting any desire for spirituous liquors, and unless again invited to some meeting or feast where spirits are produced, will abstain from partaking of it for months together.

The Resident Magistrate's Courts have been held weekly at Waimate and Russell—at the latter place sometimes oftener. The out-stations have likewise been visited as often as possible, although, since the Russell duties have devolved upon me, not so frequently as formerly. I have, however, endeavoured to meet the difficulty by requesting Natives at a distance to visit me either at Waimate, Russell, or my own residence.

A census of the Maori population of the district is being taken, and would now have been ready for transmission but for unavoidable hindrances, which have delayed the work to a later period than was anticipated.

I regret having to record one circumstance of a serious nature which has lately taken place in the district, namely, a murder committed at Whangaroa on the 26th of March last, the particulars of which I have already reported to the Government. Both the murderer and his victim were Natives, and both being well connected in the district, fears were at first entertained that serious results would follow. Some little excitement for a time prevailed amongst the relatives of the deceased, but they eventually expressed their willingness that the law should take its course.

On the 16th of April, a meeting was held at Waimate, when it was decided that the chiefs and assessors should use their influence with the relatives of the murderer in persuading them to deliver him up to justice; and on the following morning the old chief Moses Tawhai proceeded to Whangaroa for that purpose. The negotiations that followed, which I have also reported to the Government, resulted in the man being given up, and although not at the present time in custody, will be sent to Auckland during the present month.

Much praise is due to Moses Tawhai for the part he has taken in these proceedings, not the first in which he has distinguished himself in support of the law, and in this instance against a relative.

The Ngatiuru Tribe, to whom the murderer belongs, evidently felt themselves in a difficult position: careful to avoid even the appearance of opposition to the Government by refusing to deliver the man up, yet hesitating in their minds as to the course they should adopt. There existed a feeling that this call, when responded to, must be the act of his own relatives, and not that of strangers, and for this purpose it was proposed to hold a meeting at Waihou, at which the Hon. Wiremu Katene (who is a relative) and Moses Tawhai are to be present, when final arrangements are to be made. Some of the chiefs did speak in decisive language, and would have given up the man at once could they have acted apart from the tribe, whose consent they were obliged to obtain, for the Natives have yet to learn that submission to the law which will permit the removal of a prisoner unopposed by friends, whatever be his rank or position in the tribe. An advance, however, has been made, and it may be assumed that in each succeeding case less difficulty will be experienced in carrying out the requirements of the law.

I have, &c.,

EDWD. M. WILLIAMS,

Resident Magistrate.

The Hon. the Native Minister, Wellington.

No. 5.

The CIVIL COMMISSIONER, Auckland, to the UNDER SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Civil Commissioner's Office, Auckland, 2nd June, 1874.

Agreeably with instructions from the Hon. the Native Minister, I had the honor of accompanying His Excellency the Governor on his recent tour through the northern districts, including the Bay of Islands, Waimate and Ohacawai, Hokianga, Wangaroa, and Mangonui. It was also His Excellency's intention to have visited the settlement of Wangarei, but was unavoidably prevented on this occasion.

I beg leave briefly to note, for Mr. McLean's information, a few of the leading incidents as they occurred during the progress of His Excellency's visit.