

only a temporary one. I hear of a temperance movement, initiated by the "Good Templars," being successful among the Natives of an adjoining district. I trust, in the course of time, sobriety may become more the rule here, but one almost despairs of seeing the Native population sober, where such an indifferent example in this respect is shown them by their European neighbours.

I see some improvement in the Natives of the district as regards sexual morality, and nowhere was improvement in this respect more needed, where most of the tribes were more or less tainted with the license of Hauhauism.

It may, however, be observed that in all countries some marriage law has been considered a necessity for the protection of the morals of the people, whereas at the present time there is practically none for many of the Native tribes of New Zealand. Their own laws and customs were given up at the time they embraced Christianity, and for a time the missionaries became their law-givers; now, however, that the latter have ceased to influence them in any great degree, I would respectfully urge on the Government the advisability of legalizing some system of civil marriage for them,—that provided for Europeans being too expensive, and also impracticable for them at present, from their ignorance of the English language. Were such a system, suitable to their requirements, provided, I believe that it would be largely taken advantage of, and would lead in the future to a more healthy morality amongst them.

The Natives all nominally profess Christianity. At some settlements service is conducted by a Native catechist, and they take advantage of an occasional visit from a clergyman to obtain baptism for their children. I much regret that there is no minister of religion (either European or Native) resident within the district: it will be conceded by persons of all shades of opinion, that were there such, it would be conducive to the general morality of the population.

I remarked that, at the Uriwera meeting at Ruatahuna, one of the Ngatihuri, named Paumata, conducted service, morning and evening, according to what is called "Te Kooti's *karakia*." It consisted, as far as I heard, of chanting portions of the Psalms of David and saying prayers, some of which I recognized as extracted from the English Prayer Book.

II.—*Crops and Native Industries.*

The condition of a people, moral as well as physical, may be said to depend, in a great measure, on their prosperity, or, in respect to an agricultural population, on the productiveness of the soil. My district is much favoured in this respect, and it is seldom that the "Bay of Plenty" belies its name. The last summer has been a very dry one, which has had an unfavourable effect on the potato crop, especially in the coast settlements west of Opotiki. The crops of maize, wheat, kumara, &c., have been good all over the district, that of the latter being exceptionally abundant. A larger breadth of wheat was grown than last year, particularly at Torere, where the Itanga-a-Mahaki had a fine crop from the seed presented to them by the Government.

Some of the Natives, incited by the reports from the Waikato of the productiveness of the crop, are preparing land for hops. The whaling on the coast has not been so successful as in past years, though the Ngaetai and the Whanau-a-Apanui have both been to some extent fortunate. The Whakatohea and other tribes are becoming cattle-owners, and I notice that the Whanau-a-te-Ihutu have commenced keeping sheep between Te Kaha and Raukokore.

Several of the tribes are erecting large runanga-houses, on the carving and ornamentation of which a great amount of labour is expended. A large party of visitors are now assisting Apanui in putting up his house at Whakatane, the carving of the posts for which has occupied him and some of his people for years.

III.—*Disposition towards the Government, Political Feeling, &c.*

Under this division of my report I shall allude to each tribe in succession, commencing at the eastern end of the district.

The Whanau-a-te-Ihutu, the Whanau-a-Apanui, and Ngaitai continue to sustain their reputation for loyalty and general good conduct. I have visited every one of their settlements during the year, some of them several times, and have held Courts at Torere, Maraenui, Te Kaha, and Raukokore, chiefly for hearing civil cases, on one or two occasions small land disputes being submitted to my arbitration.

The Whana-a-Maru have lately leased a run near Cape Runaway to a sheep-farmer. Besides the rent which they will receive from him, I doubt not that this transaction will benefit the Natives, as bringing European settlers and capital into their neighbourhood.

The Whakatohea Tribe, though still somewhat inclined to be discontented with their land reserves and suspicious of the intentions of Government, are, I think, progressing in the matter of law and order, as they are certainly in material prosperity. They are somewhat unfortunate in having (except in the case of the Ngatiira hapu) no chiefs who have the confidence of the tribe. The Ngatiira and Ngaitama hapus have again been disagreeing about the subdivisions within the 20,000 acre reserve. The last-named hapu, being the weaker, are very anxious that the boundaries should be finally fixed by the Government or the Land Court, and, I believe, intend to prefer a request that such may be done. The Ngatiira are still living on their reserve close to the town of Opotiki, and are very energetic cultivators.

The Itanga Mahaki (surrendered rebels), some of whom, as you are aware, were leaving the district without the consent of the Government, have now all returned to Torere, and will not, I think, repeat their offence, although some of them are very anxious to return to Poverty Bay, and are continually urged to do so by some of the Turanga Natives.

The licensing meeting under the new Act for the Native district of "Cape Runaway," was held at Torere at the beginning of this month, the "Commissioners" sitting with me being the Native Assessors. No fresh licenses were granted for the ensuing year; but while the assessors showed every disposition to follow my advice, there appeared to be a great desire to grant licenses for the sale of spirits to ap-