

or as a warning or deterrent. The fine falls lightly upon the delinquent, who has commonly little to lose; but it does fall very heavily on mothers, sisters, and relatives, who beg to be allowed to pay it to save the disgrace of imprisonment.

Towards the end of last year we had several cases of petty theft committed by idlers going to and returning from Kawhia. In talking over the subject with the Native Assessors, it was agreed that the next offender should go to prison. Shortly after, a half-caste, from Kawhia, stole some green oats from a field, and was imprisoned for it. Since then no charge of the kind has been brought before the Resident Magistrate's Court.

These matters are so frequently and habitually talked over in their whares and meetings, that the Maoris, I suspect, know the law better than many Europeans, and now require no special enactments nor immunities more than the Resident Magistrate might legally exercise in case an offence might have been committed in ignorance.

I agree with Mr. Brabant that some available and inexpensive form of marriage for the Maoris would be advantageous.

That the Maoris hereabouts wish to live peaceably with the Pakeha seems certain. That the two races are gradually getting more and more mixed up in business and friendly relations is undeniable; and it can only be a matter of time ere the white settler is again welcomed at Kawhia, or wherever goods may be wanted, or produce may be for disposal.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Native Minister, Sir Donald McLean.

W. HARSANT, R.M.

No. 7.

Mr. R. S. BUSH, Raglan, to the Hon. the NATIVE MINISTER.

SIR,—

Resident Magistrate's Office, Raglan, 5th May, 1875.

I have the honor to furnish, for your information, the usual annual report on Native matters in the Raglan district.

Condition of the Natives.

It affords me much pleasure to report so favourably on Native matters on this occasion. I have adhered to my usual practice of visiting the different tribes throughout the district, at their own settlements, whenever any meetings or large gatherings have taken place. During the past year there has not been much sickness amongst the Natives in this district, excepting in the last two months, during which time many of the children and adults of the Tainui tribe have been attacked by measles. Up to the present, however, I have only heard of one death, that of an infant. It is doubtful whether this even occurred from measles. The disease is apparently much milder than it generally is. From the 1st of January, 1874, to the 31st of December, 1874, there was no epidemic amongst them. Nevertheless, the deaths for that period amounted to no less than twenty-six, and the births for the same time to twenty-three: thus the former exceeded the latter by three. The greatest mortality this year is not, like the last, amongst the infants, but upon reference to the table attached—carefully compiled from records kept by myself—it will be found that the deaths of the adults and infants are on this occasion equal. The Registrar's records of the European population, for the same period, show nine births and two deaths. The principal chief who died was Petera, a Ngatihikairo. Hone te One also lost his only child, a daughter, who, I cannot but think, was another of the many victims to Maori superstition, European advice and attendance being refused, and that of the Maori "tohunga" preferred. One can scarcely believe that intelligent Native chiefs, who have for so many years been in constant intercourse with Europeans, do still adhere to tohungaism.

Their personal conduct has been remarkably good during the past year, and I am glad to report that they still deserve the character of being the best behaved and the most sober tribes of any that I have ever been amongst. I would here state that since my last year's report only three Natives have been brought before the Court—one for drunkenness, one for furious riding, and one for petty larceny. In this case a half-caste, from Kawhia, who was sentenced to imprisonment for a short term, was set to work to cut up firewood for the court and offices. While he was employed at this work, it was ludicrous to observe the many manœuvres he resorted to, to hide his position from the Native passers-by. He would, as soon as he observed them, cease work, and endeavour to make believe that he was simply there at his own will. At other times, when out for exercise, in charge of the constable, if he perceived any Natives coming in the direction of the office, he would run into the court-house lobby and conceal himself behind the door, in order to prevent their seeing him.

It has often appeared to me that to fine a Native for theft means to punish some of his relatives, as the burden of paying the fine invariably devolves upon them, and the thief really suffers nothing. The above case clearly shows that the Natives consider it a disgrace to be imprisoned, but to be fined is a mere nothing. It is not often that a Native once imprisoned for stealing, unless he be an incorrigible, is convicted a second time; and as it is necessary for the suppression of crime that the deterrent should be as severe as possible, I would most respectfully suggest that the present fining system be abolished, except in very exceptional cases, when it might be judicious and politic to resort to it. I believe this alteration would prove beneficial to the Native race.

The Ngatitahinga tribe, residing here at Te Akau, are very much annoyed with one of their assessors, for carrying on an intrigue with a brother assessor's wife. Unfortunately, both these families reside at the same settlement, viz., Waikoria.

The tribe want to order the offender away, but they do not know how they can do so legally. He refuses to go, and as they do not wish to return to their old custom of "muru," they are forwarding a petition to you, praying you to dismiss the assessor complained against from his office, and to remove him from that settlement, as they consider one or other of these persons ought to remove. They object to the injured husband doing so, and hope the offender will. The foregoing is purely an *ex parte* statement, which I make use of for the sake of the following observations:—Marriages in accord-