

It has for the last few years been the practice to invite all the tribes to meet at Te Kuiti in the month of March, and it has invariably been anticipated that some solution of the great difficulty would then be arrived at. Upon the last occasion hopes were entertained that His Excellency the Governor and the Hon. the Native Minister, who had been invited by Tawhiao, would be present, and that the problem would at last be solved. But when it became known that Government did not respond, Tawhiao purposely absented himself, and his example being followed by many influential chiefs, the meeting, for all practical purposes, resulted, like former ones, in failure. It is true that the stock speeches forbidding the traffic in land were made and of course assented to, but visitors from distant parts were loud in their expressions of disappointment that they had made long journeys to Te Kuiti for nothing. Speakers from Wairarapa and Whanganui urged that Waikato should appoint a commission to lay their grievances before the Imperial Parliament, but I do not think that the Kingites entertained the proposal, originating as it did in the over-conciliatory and even obsequious spirit displayed by all but the most staunch Queenites while the guests of the Maori King. I observe that in other parts of the colony this idea of redress from the Home Government has been enunciated: indeed it is not new here, and I think that it may be traced to the teachings of intriguing or officious white men. These meetings tend very much to impoverish the people in the neighbourhood of Kuiti; but are productive of good nevertheless, for they act as safety-valves. A good deal of high-toned talk is indulged in by what I may call the Ultra-Hauhau party, but no harm is done, for the bulk of the people are bent upon amusement and display, and they at last separate with the understanding that things are to remain *in statu quo* till next annual gathering. So long as this state of things exists, though the advancement of the country may be retarded, still we are not losing ground, but on the contrary the way is being gradually prepared for an amicable settlement, which sooner or later appears inevitable, and must result in the opening of large tracts of fertile land.

The most important occurrence of the year, more especially from the Maori point of view, was the meeting at Waitomo of the Hon. Sir D. McLean and Tawhiao, particulars of which have been given in a former report. A few years ago such an event would have been deemed impossible; and though nothing definite was arrived at upon this occasion, for it could only be regarded as a preliminary step, it has rendered subsequent meetings comparatively easy. Tawhiao continues to show a very friendly spirit. He has for the last four months been living at Kawhia, and he shows a disposition to make that place his permanent head-quarters. In that case he will be followed by a great number of his own people, and by this means a very important point—namely, the partial separation by their own action of Waikato from Ngatimaniapoto—would be gained, and the management of the two tribes very much simplified.

Another noticeable event is the tour—not yet completed—of Manga (or Rewi), through the Bay of Plenty settlements, undertaken apparently without any political purpose, but simply that he might enter the carved house of Ngatiawa at Whakatane, upon the opening of which a few months since special reference had been made to him by Sir D. McLean and Apanui, chief of Ngatiawa, and thus show his appreciation of the compliment and his desire for friendly intercourse. Manga, a few months ago, showed very good feeling when he passed an officer of the Armed Constabulary through from Waikato to Taranaki, giving as his reason that the officer in question was “a Pakeha of Te Makarini’s, who wished to visit his friends, and he did not see why he should be hindered from doing so.” I need hardly add that such an incident as the open passage of an official through the entire length of the King country has not occurred for at least twelve or fourteen years. Influenced by Manga, a portion of the Hauhau section of Ngatiraukawa are about to establish themselves at Otautahanga, just beyond the confiscation line at Orakau; their object being to grow grain nearer to a market than their own settlements of Aotearoa and Wharepapa, and perhaps to prevent occupation of the land by others, it having been sold some years since by Ngatihaua, who, there is good reason to believe, had no right to it whatever.

I will now remark upon the Kupapa. After the Waikato war these people sank into an indolent shiftless course of life, which they have maintained up to the present time. I think, however, that a slight improvement has taken place lately. The failure of the flax industry has caused those living near the river to turn their attention more to the cultivation of wheat and potatoes. It may at first sight appear contradictory that the closing of any legitimate source of profit should ultimately benefit a community, but I have found that by a steady pursuit of agriculture alone does the Maori, collectively, become prosperous. The wages of military service or of any other irregular vocation are spent at the public-house or in the purchase of fine clothes; the planting season is perhaps lost, and he is worse off than before. Those tribes who confine themselves to the cultivation of food are invariably more thriving and healthy. Wiremu te Wheoro and a few other chiefs have with some success awakened their people to a sense of the evils of excess in the use of spirituous liquors: a considerable number have promised reformation, but it remains to be seen whether they are sincere. The school at Karakariki, the only one in Waikato now, numbers about thirty scholars. It seems to be very well conducted by members of the Rev. Wiremu Patene’s family. Speaking generally, I am of opinion that the Natives of this district are beginning to exhibit a much better spirit, and I also think that their condition is slowly improving.

The Under Secretary Native, Department, Wellington.

I have, &c.,
W. G. MAIR.

No. 2.

Mr. HOPKINS CLARKE, Native Officer, Tauranga, to the UNDER SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Civil Commissioner’s Office, Tauranga, 11th June, 1875.

In accordance with instructions contained in your circular of the 6th April last, I have the honor to make the following report:—