

to inform you that the past year has been a somewhat uneventful one, very few changes having taken place among our Maoris. The most noticeable events have been the initiation by the Kingites of a new form of religion called the *Tariao*, which is happily but partially adopted in Raglan; and in March the so-called King sent from Kawhia what the Maoris call *rakau tapu*. Respecting the significance of this figure, different opinions are held; some regard it as a mischievous act, others only as an act of folly.

Although this has been a healthy year with them and no chiefs of note have died, yet I fear their numbers are steadily on the decrease, even in this healthy place, where fish can be procured as an addition to their other food.

In morals and social habits the Maoris remain unchanged; at the same time, I must say in their favour there has been less drunkenness and card-playing, and consequently less crime, than in former years.

They are likely to be better off for food than they have been for two or three years past, perhaps owing to their working more bullocks on their cultivations. They appear not to have much wheat, but a fair crop of potatoes, kumeras, and maize. Probably, owing to their improvident habits and their wasteful *huis*, food may be short with them before this time next year, in which case I would respectfully suggest that fairly remunerative employment on the roads would be the greatest boon you could give them, thus giving Kupapas and Kingites a common object and pursuit. When formerly the Waipu Road was talked about, both parties expressed their eagerness to work; and I think it would foster the friendly feeling certainly springing up, and tend to bring the Kingites (if their suspicions be not excited by too much notice) to resume, of their own accord, something like their former intercourse with the Pakeha.

The Hon. the Native Minister, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

W. H. HABSANT, R.M.

No. 30.

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

SIR,—

Resident Magistrate's Office, Raglan, 25th April, 1876.

In compliance with the circular received, I have the honor to furnish for your information the usual annual report on Native matters in the Raglan and Kawhia Districts.

Condition of the Natives.

It is with much pleasure that I report so favourably on the condition of the Natives in these districts, who have been free from any epidemic, and the mortality has not been greater than in former years. The deaths that have occurred during the year 1875 have been chiefly of old people and adults, numbering altogether 23; and the births for same period are 28. Tawhiao's daughter and Te Taphana's son are the only two of high rank during the year. The Native company is still in existence, although their store here has been empty for months. I am sorry for this, as I have done my utmost to foster this undertaking, in the hope that it would turn out a success, and ultimately prove beneficial to both races. The cutter is still trading between here and Manukau. I have adhered to my usual practice of visiting the different tribes throughout the district when occasion has required.

Disposition.

A very apparent change has come over the Natives residing at Aotea South and Kawhia, since your visit there, and your subsequent interview with Tawhiao at Waitomo, since which time he has made no less than four visits to this side of Aotea, on one occasion going as far as Ruapuke, where he passed some hours with the European settlers. It was his intention during his late sojourn at Kawhia to have visited Raglan; but his little daughter's illness and death, together with a difference of opinion between him and his uncle Tawhia, better known as Takerei te Rau, prevented his doing so. I believe he is still bent upon coming here. Tawhiao, since taking over the management of affairs, has with the aid of Te Taphana, Manuhiri, and one or two other chiefs, initiated a new kind of worship, which is conducted by persons called Tariaos, of whom there are at least two at every kainga; men who have not been foremost in promoting evil in times past: for instance, Waata Taki and others of same stamp are excluded, on account of former turbulent acts. Perhaps I shall not be deemed out of place if I give a short sketch of the manner in which this service is performed:—One of the Tariaos commences with a very short prayer, which is followed by the genealogical chants and hymns. These being finished, another Tariao allots the prayers to those present, as follows: two (*ki waho*) for the men Tariao, two (*ki roto*) for the women Tariao. This being done, some Tariao says, "Pai marire," as a signal that he wishes to pray. He repeats his prayer, which being concluded, another Tariao follows; and so on to the end of the service.

The services are solemnly conducted. Although I have taken every opportunity of being present and listening to them, yet I have failed to hear anything which leads one to suppose the object is other than the prevention of evil works, as proclaimed in Tawhiao's proclamation at the time he commenced the new religion.

There are many similes and figures of speech used, the exact meanings of which none seem to understand, except those who utter them. Every one appears to pray as he feels, no two person using the same expressions. Some pray to Tawhiao, and some to God; but generally the prayers are said alternately—one to God, and one to Tawhiao.

Since the inauguration of this new *karakia*, a better feeling appears to have existed between the two great Waikato tribes, Ngatimaniapoto and Waikato. It will be remembered that for the last few years these two tribes have been gradually becoming estranged; but the difference of opinion just now is not recurred to so frequently, nor is it so perceptible as it was this time last year, notwithstanding the cool treatment which Wahanui received from Tawhiao the other day at Kawhia, where he had come with others to *uhunga* for Tawhiao's daughter. There were about 600 present of different tribes.