

1877.

NEW ZEALAND.

FURTHER REPORTS FROM OFFICERS IN NATIVE DISTRICTS.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by command of His Excellency.

No. 1.

Mr. H. W. BRABANT, R.M., to the Hon. the NATIVE MINISTER

SIR,—

Tauranga, 20th July, 1877.

In reply to your circular, requesting me to report on the state of the Natives in my district, I have the honor to do so as follows:—

I.—TAURANGA DISTRICT.

1. There is little change to remark on in the physical condition of the Natives of this district. A considerable number of deaths have taken place, while but few children have been born, and of these a large proportion die in infancy. The Native census is not yet quite completed, but it is evident that it will show a considerable decrease in the population since it was last taken.

The Natives have been assisted with medical attendance, comforts, &c., during illness to fullest extent practicable. Among the deaths which have occurred is that of the loyal chief Te Kuka Te Mea.

In regard to the criminal statistics of the district—two Natives were committed for trial at the Supreme Court during the past year, one for horse-stealing, and one for unlawfully wounding another Native. The summary convictions of Natives at the Resident Magistrate's Court were as follows:—For larceny, 2; obstructing the police, 2; assault, 1; breach of Vagrant Act, 1; and drunkenness, 8.

In the civil Court a considerable number of cases were tried between Europeans and Natives but only four in which both plaintiff and defendant were Maoris. This is accounted for by most of the disputes between Natives having been settled by the Assessors, to several of whom I am much indebted for the assistance they have afforded me.

2. The Ngaiterangi tribe have, as usual, grown a considerable quantity of grain, and the crop has been a more productive one than it was last year. A number of them continue to work for the European settlers at seed and harvest times. I may remark that there appears to be an increased desire amongst them to dispose of their surplus lands to Europeans. One purchase of considerable extent has taken place during the past year, besides a number of small ones, and others are, I believe, in the course of negotiation. The individualization of the Native titles has been proceeded with by me in the Commissioner's Court, but, having made a special report to you on this subject, it is unnecessary for me to allude further to it here.

3. As to the state of law and order of the Natives in this district, of the greater number I can remark that they are thoroughly amenable to our laws, generally honest, and as well disposed to Government as could be wished. I must, however, except a party of semi-disaffected Natives who reside at Te Puna, only a few miles out of Tauranga, on the Katikati Road. They principally belong to the Pirirakau and Ngatirangiwehewehi Hapus, and consist altogether of about forty-five males, besides women and children. These Natives profess to belong to the "King" party, are in constant communication with them, and make it their boast that they have never surrendered since they were in arms against Government. They are most of them living on Government (confiscated) land, which they profess still to hold on their ancient title (or rather on the title of some individuals of them). These few Natives, Sir, may, I think, be regarded as typical of the "Native difficulty" as it exists in New Zealand at present. They have no doubt the will to disturb the peace of the country, were it not that the large majority of the Natives holding different opinions renders any scheme with this aim in their opinion at present too hazardous; but they say they are only "biding their time." They are but partially subject to our laws; but, to make them wholly so, it would be necessary to enforce the law "at the point of the bayonet." This course the Parliament and the country having decided against, the "Native difficulty," such as it is, still exists; but it is growing less formidable year by year.

II.—BAY OF PLENTY.

In addition to the Tauranga District, I am placed in general charge of Native matters in the adjoining ones of Opotiki and Maketu. In respect to them, I find but little to add to the remarks which have been made by the resident Native officers.

1. In the Opotiki District the Natives continue to be remarkable only for industry and good conduct. It is gratifying to be able to report that the Urewera tribe, who were until lately semi-hostile, now appear to be surrendering themselves voluntarily to the rule of law and of the Government. During the year members of the tribe charged with crime have been brought out of their mountain fastnesses by their chiefs for trial by our Courts, and they have even quietly permitted the survey of some of their lands, with a view to their being adjudicated on by the Native Land Court.

2. In the Maketu District, with the exception of one or two land disputes, matters have been quiet during the past year. The Natives are preparing themselves for the great Land Court which, it is presumed, will shortly be held to adjudicate on the titles of the lands alienated to Government.

The Arawa tribe appear to be very anxious at present to repair the flour mills which exist in various parts of their district, and have collected considerable sums of money for the purpose, which have in some cases been supplemented by the Government. I trust that this may be regarded as a sign of the revival of industrial pursuits amongst this tribe.

3. I am instructed in my report to mention any public works carried out by Natives. These have been but insignificant this year, owing not so much to the disinclination of the Natives to work as to the cessation of these works. The Whakatane Natives have completed the Te Teko Road, which has been in course of formation by them for some years, and have also made a portion of the Whakatane Valley Road. These works are of great local importance in giving access to land. Natives have also been employed from time to time on the Tauranga and Taupo Road.

4. There are nine Native schools now in operation in the Bay of Plenty, besides one at Torere, the building for which is completed, but to which no master has yet been posted. I have visited each school at least once during the past year, and am able to report favourably of the scheme as a whole. I do not claim, Sir, for these schools the almost marvellous effects which have at times been attributed to such institutions, but I think that a fair number of Native children, who otherwise would grow up in total ignorance, acquire through them the rudiments of education the effects of which must show in their after lives; and, apart from the question whether it is not the duty of the State to provide such education, I believe that any one who has a knowledge of the work done by these school-teachers will admit that the expenditure on them is not money lost.

At Opotiki several Native children are being educated at the European school, with good results. In accordance with your instructions a boarding-house has been erected near the district school at Tauranga, in order that the sons of some of the Bay of Plenty chiefs may be educated at that institution.

I trust in a few weeks to be able to report this in operation.

I have, &c.,

H. W. BRABANT,
Native Officer, in charge Bay of Plenty.

The Hon. the Native Minister,
Wellington.

No. 2.

Mr. H. T. KEMP, Civil Commissioner, to the UNDER SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Civil Commissioner's Office, Auckland, 30th August, 1877.

Referring to my telegrams, dated respectively the 16th and 20th instant, I have now the honor, in continuation, to furnish for the Hon. the Native Minister's information some details connected with the Native meeting held at the Kawakawa, Bay of Islands, on the 16th of August and following days.

The circumstances which led to the meeting may be briefly traced thus:—

1. Soon after the County Council Act was passed an election of members took place at Hokianga, but a very general feeling of disappointment took place, it was alleged, at the short notice given and, as a consequence, the return of men who had neither the *status* nor landed interests to qualify them for the post of County Councillors.

2. The Council, having assembled, proceeded to fix and levy rates, which were in some instances thought to be not only excessive but illegal. This, in the latter case, specially applied to land for which grants had been issued to more than one or two persons claiming an equal but in most instances an undefined or individual interest. In the absence of this, the assessment papers were (as by law required) addressed to and the amount levied in the name of the best man. This appears to have given, in some cases, great dissatisfaction, and it was all but resolved to resist the payment of the rates, and thus to set the local authorities at defiance. Better counsels, however, prevailed, and it was then determined to call a meeting, and to invite Native delegates from all the other counties north of Auckland, with a view to a general discussion upon the question of paying rates under the Acts above mentioned, and a time and place were thereupon fixed.

3. The settlement at the Kawakawa was recommended as a central position and the new hall thought of as the most suitable building within which to hold the conference. Application was accordingly made to Marsh Brown Kawiti, the principal resident chief of the district, to allow the meeting to be called together in his name; and by him circulars were addressed to the leading men in the adjoining counties, several of whom attended, others sending agents or deputies, Mangonui County being the only one unrepresented.

4. The House met at noon on the 16th, Mr. Wi Katene, ex-M.H.R., being voted to the chair. The first matter brought under notice was the sudden stoppage of traffic on the line of tramway which leads through the village by the manager of the mine, in which the resident Natives claim to have a certain vested interest. A resolution was carried asking the Native Minister to use his influence to have the obstruction removed for the use of foot passengers, until some better provision be made. Although some little longer notice might have been given, and on further explanation it was not intended to interfere with persons on foot, and the excitement which lasted for the time soon subsided. The

orders for the following day were then made anent the Counties Act, and the meeting adjourned to ten o'clock a.m. on the following day.

5. At ten o'clock a.m. on the 17th, the hall was filled and the gallery occupied by members of the other sex. There were also present—the Chief Hare Hongi, the only surviving son of the late well-known Hongi Hika; the Chairman of the County Council, H. Williams, Esq., by invitation and on the part of the Government; the Resident Magistrate, and myself, including Dr. Aggazzis and other gentlemen, all of whom were in attendance by request, and gave explanations of the clauses and working of the Act. Altogether about 100 delegates assembled, and, on the motion for considering the provisions of the Counties Act in so far as they trench upon Native interests, a warm discussion ensued, which continued with but little intermission until nine o'clock p.m. The question then as to whether the Act should be set aside, or be allowed to take its course subject to some amendments, was pressed to a division. The doors being locked, the votes were carefully taken by the Chairman, and resulted in a majority in favour of the latter course. While this was being done, the excitement was at its height, and the announcement from the chair was received with cheers from both sides.

6. On the 18th the House resumed, and, after touching in approving terms on the withdrawal by the Government of the Native Lands Bill, and other minor local matters, an adjournment was made to that day six months, when they would offer suggestions on the Act referred to.

I have much pleasure in saying that the proceedings throughout were conducted in good order under Mr. Katene's direction. The forms in use in our public debates were as nearly as they could be observed. Some of the speeches were well and logically rendered, and if to this be added the not less interesting and successful feature of the meeting—viz., that of deciding a knotty point by the votes of the majority, the Government will, I think, willingly accept the result as an indication of that better state of things which in some districts have marked the political discussions of the Native people.

I have, &c.,

The Under Secretary, Native Department,
Wellington.

H. T. KEMP,
Civil Commissioner.

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