

Napier District.

The general state of the Natives has been quiet. There have, however, been several tribal land disputes which have appeared to be serious at the time. I have no doubt that these matters can be settled by the Natives themselves after a short time, when local jealousy has died out.

A number of the Natives of the southern end of the district have joined the new faith started by Paora Potangaroa, of Wairarapa. Nearly 300 Natives from Hawke's Bay attended the late meeting held at Wairarapa by Paora for the purpose of promulgating his views on religion. Several of the sick persons whom he asked to attend the meeting for the purpose of being cured of their ailments, died when visiting him. It is probable he will find some excuse for his want of success in these cases. At Petane and Tangoio a number of the Natives have become disciples of Te Kooti's religion, and are in constant communication with him. On the other hand, a portion of the same tribe have so strong a feeling against the movement that they have built a church and are endeavouring to win back the Te Kooti-ites to their former faith.

The Pakowhai schoolhouse is being repaired, and will be reopened in July. I hope to be able to report favourably on it. The site is a good one, and there are children enough in the neighbourhood to support a school, if they can only be induced to attend.

The Natives complain that they can get very little information about their lands after they have passed through the Court. I would suggest that a record of all transactions by the Native Land Court affecting land within the provincial district be sent to the District Land Registry or Registrar of Deeds Office, and that ordinary search fees should be charged; also that all fees due on certificates, succession orders, &c., be payable at the local Registrar's Office.

Legislation is required in regard to "The Mohaka and Waikare District Act, 1870," which appears to have been repealed without any provision being made for the appointment of successors by the Native Land Court for the interests of deceased grantees held under the former Act.

I cannot say much for the moral condition of the Natives in this district. I find that Natives in less civilized districts compare favourably with those who have lived for years surrounded by Europeans.

Wairoa District.

In May, 1880, there was a very serious land dispute in this district—between the Whakaki and Nuhaka Natives concerning a piece of land called Opoho. Shots were exchanged between the contending parties. The matter, however, was referred to the Napier chiefs, who held a meeting in Wairoa last month, and gave a decision practically in favour of the Whakaki Natives. It is questionable whether the other party will accept this, but the discussion has done good, and will be the means of the land being surveyed and passed through the Court.

Nearly all the returned rebels, and some of the friendly Natives, are disciples of Te Kooti's form of religion. Mere Karaka, the widow of the loyal chief Kopu, is one of the promoters of it, and is in constant communication with him; these Natives are constantly visiting Te Kooti in Waikato. I do not think these Natives can be called "disaffected," but it is difficult to say how they may be moved by fanaticism in the event of any difficulty arising in which Te Kooti might be mixed up. There is no doubt he has a great power over them.

Two sites for Native schools have been given by the Natives during the last few months, one at Ruataniwha and one at Ramoto; the Natives at the latter place appear to take a great interest in school matters.

Large quantities of maize have been grown in this district, especially at Nuhaka.

I think there is an improvement in the moral condition of the Natives of this district. There is very little drunkenness or other crime amongst them.

The following are the cases in the Resident Magistrate's Court in which Natives have been concerned:—Civil cases: Between Natives, 4; between Europeans and Natives, 10; Natives against European, 3. Criminal Summary: Drunkenness, 4, convicted; Dog Registration Act, 5 convicted, 1 dismissed; Abduction, 1, dismissed; Vagrant Act, 2, convicted; Cattle-stealing, 1, committed for trial.

In the Tologa Bay and Waiapu Districts, which I visit on judicial duty, I find the Natives are becoming more and more amenable to the law, and anxious to avail themselves of it.

I have, &c.

GEORGE A. PREECE,
Resident Magistrate.

The Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

No. 13.

Mr. E. S. MAUNSELL, Native Agent, Wairarapa, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department.
SIR,—

Greytown, 17th May, 1881.

In compliance with instructions contained in your Circular of the 23rd ultimo, I have the honor to report on the state of the Maoris in my district during the past year.

Throughout the district an improvement is visible in the social and physical state of the Maoris; this is attributable to their abandonment of Hauhauism, which led many to commit acts of imprudence in irregular diet and clothing; such preyed on their health, and caused considerable mortality.

I notice during the past year they are wearying of their committee meetings. The monotonous life Maoris lead occasions them to seize upon any novel idea pronounced by any individual of their race, an interest is excited, which the subject, whatever it may be—such as a supposed prophecy being accidentally fulfilled as regards weather, political changes, and a variety of other causes, culminating in meetings to discuss it, involving by such a large outlay of money for provisions, &c., thereby impoverishing themselves. They have not the opportunities which Europeans have of whiling away leisure hours, such as in reading and discussing interesting subjects, or amusing themselves in the various ways Europeans do. The only books they have are the Old and New Testaments and Church services, which they have exhausted. It is nothing new to them to take a passage of scripture when they have nothing to occupy their attention, and read it merely for the sake of reading; but not having the advantages of education they cannot draw inferences worthy of discussion. They can repeat Scripture to a large extent, the benefit they derive from it is only superficial.