

1883.  
NEW ZEALAND.

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## REPORTS FROM OFFICERS IN NATIVE DISTRICTS.

[In Continuation of G.-1, 1882.]

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

### No. 1.

The UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department, to OFFICERS in NATIVE DISTRICTS.  
(Circular No. 8.)

SIR,—

Native Office, Wellington, 11th May, 1883.

I have the honour, by direction of Mr. Bryce, to request that you will be good enough to forward at your earliest convenience, but not later than the 14th proximo, the usual annual report upon the state of the Natives in your district, for presentation to Parliament.

I have, &c.,

T. W. LEWIS,

Under-Secretary.

### No. 2.

G. T. WILKINSON, Esq., Alexandra, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Native Office, Alexandra, 11th June, 1883.

In accordance with the request contained in your Circular No. 8, of the 11th ultimo, I have the honour to forward herewith my annual report upon the state of the Natives in the Waikato and Thames Districts.

#### *Waikato and the King Country.*

In the month of July last I received instructions to take over the Districts of Auckland and Waikato, including the district known as the King Country, as part of my duties as Native Agent, in the place of Major Mair, who had been appointed to a Judgeship in the Native Land Court Department. I accordingly took over the Auckland office work in the early part of September last, and shortly after visited Alexandra, and commenced my work amongst the Waikato or King Natives.

The first Native matter of importance that took place in the Waikato District during the past year was the capture of Winiata, who was charged with the murder of Edwin Packer, at Epsom, near Auckland, in 1876. I need not refer here to the mode of his capture, nor to the means used by the half-caste Barlow in order to bring it about, as that is now a matter of history. Suffice it to say that the effect upon the Natives, both criminals and others, was most salutary. Every one who had broken the law in years gone by, and was therefore "wanted," was more or less startled by the news of Winiata's capture, trial, and subsequent death by hanging. Te Kooti, Purukutu, and others were all "by the ears." The first-named at once established a regular guard over himself, and warned all Europeans and half-castes not to come near Te Kuiti, where he was living. He evidently saw then that Tawhiao, as King, was powerless to protect him against the law, so he determined to take measures to protect himself. To the bulk of the King Natives, who had nothing to fear on account of any evil deeds of their own, the arrest of criminals out of their very midst must have caused consternation; albeit the means employed by Barlow to bring about the capture, and thereby secure the money-reward, took a great deal from the effect that otherwise it would have had amongst the King Natives.

Following shortly after this came the Hon. Native Minister's meeting with Tawhiao at Whatiwhatihoe. What took place at that meeting has already been fully recorded both by the Press and by official documents, so that it is not necessary for me to refer to it here more than to say that, judging from subsequent events, more real result was brought about through that meeting than at any previous one that had taken place between a representative of the Government and the Maori King. True, Tawhiao did not accept the terms offered to him, and for which he was to abdicate in favour of law, order, and progress of civilization; in fact, those who are in a position to know the circumstances under which the first Maori King was set up, and the reasons that have caused these people, his followers, to bind themselves together and act in concert during the last twenty-five years, did not consider it at all likely that he would accept the terms offered to him;—and in saying "would"

I think I might more properly substitute "could," for, as shown when forced to declare what he intended to do with regard to the proposals made him, it was necessary for him to refer the final settlement of the question to those who, although he as King represented them, still were more powerful and had more to say regarding the matter than he, viz., the Ngatimaniapoto, who at that meeting were represented by one of their most powerful chiefs named Wahanui. Tawhiao's whole demeanour during the close of the meeting with the Hon. the Native Minister was an exhibition of puerility and helplessness: he even conveyed the idea to some that in his heart he would gladly have accepted the generous proposals made to him had he dared do so. Be that as it may, it was quite apparent that for the future he, personally, was not the one with whom negotiations affecting the King movement were to be carried on. As a weak person in trouble calls for assistance to those whom he looks upon as his strength, so Tawhiao called upon Ngatimaniapoto (through Wahanui) to know what he should do in his extremity. The reply was not long in coming, and under the circumstances was what was to have been expected. It was in effect—as reference to reports will show—"No, not yet; we will hold out still longer;" and when we consider now that Ngatimaniapoto, really the power and back-bone of kingism, have during the last few years been apparently ignored by Europeans, whilst Tawhiao, who was only their head so long as they allowed him to be so, was being feted and extolled whenever he travelled within European territory, it cannot be wondered at that Wahanui, having thus the whole power and responsibility thrown suddenly and openly upon him, should take advantage of the situation in which he found himself placed. Although his speeches in reply to the Hon. the Native Minister had at that time an appearance of defiance about them, his action during subsequent negotiations has shown that he is really actuated by a desire for the future welfare and well-being of his people and their lands. He, curiously enough, entirely ignores Tawhiao, as King, having any right or claim over the Ngatimaniapoto lands; neither do they (the Ngatimaniapoto) propose to do anything in the way of providing land out of their large store for Tawhiao and his people, for whose present almost landless state they must know they are to a great extent responsible through their combined action in setting up the Maori King and fighting under his standard, and which action brought about the confiscation of Waikato. Notwithstanding this, the Ngatimaniapoto consider that the Waikatos have no claim upon them, unless they can prove a title in the usual way through ancestry, conquest, or occupation. But, although Ngatimaniapoto are so unmindful as to what becomes of Waikato, they are not so with regard to themselves and their own land; in fact, they are evincing a most lively and laudable interest in connection with its future disposition. It is an all-absorbing topic with them just now, and they have requested that all surveys and public works be postponed in their district until they shall have come to a decision amongst themselves as to the way in which they can best throw their lands open to the public with advantage to themselves. They have carefully noted the unsatisfactory way in which the Natives who are now attending the Cambridge Land Court are dispossessed of their lands, partly through expensive litigation, and partly through the unsatisfactory system of land-purchase now in vogue. They propose, after due deliberation amongst themselves as to the best way in which to dispose of their land, to petition Parliament to have a new Land Act passed, which will embody as far as possible the scheme they have to propose. Should this be found practicable, and effect be given to it, there will then be no objection on their part to the throwing-open of their country for settlement. In fact, when the proper time arrives, I shall not be at all surprised if they are then as anxious for public works to be carried on over their lands as they have previously been opposed to them—but they wish the new state of affairs to be put on a proper basis first, and the opening of the country to follow. The principal drawback in the matter is the great delay in getting them to come to any decision among themselves as to what they really do want. They have amongst themselves so many individual opinions and ideas, they are so jealous of one another, and of investing their chiefs with too much power and authority over the lands of the whole, and, last, but not least, there are so many Europeans who consider they have a mission to counsel and instruct them as to what is the best thing to be done, and how to do it, that really it is not to be wondered at that they are bewildered, and cannot make up their minds quickly as to how they will act. As soon, however, as they have decided what to do, and their petition is signed, it is the intention of Wahanui, or some one else representing the tribe, to convey it in person to Wellington, and endeavour to bring about the desired results. Should they be successful, and measures be adopted which will induce the Ngatimaniapoto to throw open their country for settlement, then I think the King movement will practically be at an end, for, without Ngatimaniapoto to support it, it must assume very small proportions, as Tawhiao would then be left with a very small following, and they would have to take up their abode in the vicinity of Kawhia, where they still have some land. But I must confess that I cannot yet see how Ngatimaniapoto can with good grace entirely cast off the King and his people. Of course, if their country is opened their hands will be considerably strengthened by the introduction of Europeans, and those of the King party proportionately weakened; but still I consider that the Waikatos have a strong claim upon the sympathy of Ngatimaniapoto, and, unless this is in some way recognized, I shall not be surprised if a bitter feud hereafter springs up between them. It is to be hoped, however, that, by the time the Ngatimaniapoto country is opened for settlement, Tawhiao and his few remaining followers, seeing that they are not supported by Ngatimaniapoto, will "throw up the sponge," and a satisfactory amalgamation between the two take place. At present, however, it looks very much like as if Ngatimaniapoto were content to leave Tawhiao and his Waikatos to be provided for by Government under the Waikato Confiscated Lands Act, or in any other way that it may see fit.

As the allocation of Natives under the Waikato Confiscated Land Acts also forms part of my duties, I may here state that during the last seven months considerable effort has been made to get some of the landless Waikatos who principally form Tawhiao's following, and who come under the category of ex-rebels, to accept portions of Government land within the confiscation boundary, and occupy and cultivate the same. These efforts have been, on the whole, fairly successful, but

not to the extent that they would have been had the land that was available for them been of good or even fair average quality. Unfortunately it is not so, being mostly either bald fern hills or mountainous timber land, which is not at all the kind of land likely to prove attractive enough to draw the Waikatos from living where they are at present, even if it were possible for them to get a subsistence out of it, which they could not. The poorness of the land under offer to them is not, however, the only reason that keeps them from accepting this offer of land from the Government. The other reason—and I am not at all sure that it is not the main one—is that the time has hardly arrived yet at which they feel justified, or even have a desire, to desert the King, the principles they profess, and their present style of living. Sufficiently troublous times have not yet come upon them: they do not realize the fact that Ngatimaniapoto will most likely separate from them and cast them off without an acre. The advent of Europeans in their midst has not yet been in such numbers as to make apparent to them their own weakness and helpless minority; in fact, the shoe does not pinch enough yet. When it does, I think there will then be no difficulty in getting them to accept lands at the hands of the Government; but, when that time does arrive, I am of opinion that it will be necessary to secure, by purchase or otherwise, a large block somewhere in the Waikato District, which shall combine a sea-frontage, with land inshore of a quality suitable for occupation and cultivation, and which also has timber for building purposes and firewood upon it. As a proof that the majority of the King Natives will not yet accept land from the Government, I may mention the fact that when, in December last, Mr. F. D. Fenton and myself accompanied representatives of the King people down the Waipa and Waikato Rivers, for the purpose of pointing out to them certain blocks of land which were open for their occupation, they would not in any way give us to understand that they intended to occupy them, or that they even appreciated the gift. They merely consented to go on shore and view them, with the apparent intention of claiming them at some future time when they shall think fit. Seeing their demeanour in connection with this matter I took the precaution to inform them that, under the Waikato Confiscated Land Act, unless they occupied the land, or if they absented themselves from it for two years, they would forfeit all right to it. They mostly, however, received my announcement with indifference. Another reason that has and is now militating against the acceptance and occupation of these lands by the King Natives is that Tawhiao has lately developed a desire for travel, and has with his followers since December last been nearly continuously absent from home. The novelty and pleasure of visiting the numerous settlements on the line of march, at each of which it was well known they would be fêted to their hearts' content by the resident Natives, was the very opposite of being conducive to their deserting their King for the purpose of settling upon lands for which they do not see the necessity. A great deal was, at the commencement, thought and made of the fact that, these lands under offer to them being part of what once formed their ancestral territory, they would therefore gladly return and settle upon them, but I am satisfied now that such an idea is a fallacy: it may hold good in exceptional cases, but certainly not as a whole. If any further proof of this were required we have only to look at the failure of endeavours during the last fourteen years to get ex-rebels of the Ngatihaua tribe to desert the king and occupy the Tauwhare Block, near Hamilton, which they originally owned, to see that it is only in particular cases and under exceptional circumstances that they have an ardent desire to return and occupy the territory which they have lost, unless it be given back to them as a whole, without any restrictions—in fact, a sort of abandonment of it on our part into their hands. But, notwithstanding all these drawbacks, the endeavours to settle the Natives on confiscated lands have, as I said before, been fairly successful; a considerable number of the Ngatimahuta, who had been squatting at places called Moerangi and Matahuru, near the south-eastern end of Waikare Lake, have been interviewed, their desire to return and live in peace and obedience to the law ascertained, and the boundaries of the land which they are to have defined. At the northern end of the same lake a number of the Ngatihine tribe have been located and their boundaries defined; and I have every reason to believe that in both cases their residence will be permanent. Matters are also in progress with regard to certain members of the Ngatiapakura tribe, who have expressed a desire to settle on some unoccupied Government land in the vicinity of Alexandra and the Puniu River, and they will be located thereon in a few days. They will also take a portion of the available land at Kaniwhaniwha, on the western bank of the Waipa River.

In connection with this matter of giving land to Natives there is great difficulty in discriminating as to which of the people claiming are the proper persons who can be recognized under the Waikato Confiscated Lands Act as ex-rebels. If the work to be done consisted merely in giving land to those who asked for it, I could have had, long before this, all the available land allocated to applicants—but then they would have consisted in many cases of those, some of whom had no right at all, and some of whom had already been provided for by Compensation Court awards or from other sources, and who, having since sold what was then given to them, would, if allowed, do the same with what they might get now, that is, if they were successful in getting it. My endeavour has been, and is, to only allot the land to those for whom it was intended by the Waikato Confiscated Lands Act.

Before dropping entirely the subject of Tawhiao and the King Natives and movement, which is a most important one, it would be well, perhaps, if I here referred to the policy lately adopted by him of travelling through the country and visiting the tribes inhabiting the districts in which he goes, and also state what my own opinion is with regard to such policy. Of course it is only an opinion after all, and, seeing how very hard indeed it is to judge the Maori character successfully, may not be right. However, as my position amongst the Natives is such as to enable me to form an opinion, I give it here. I think that Tawhiao plainly sees, from events which have lately taken place, that Kingism, and the power invested in him as its representative, is doomed, and it is now only a question of time as to when it must virtually end. Therefore, believing this to be the case, he is now, I think, taking steps to enable him to justify himself in whatever he may hereafter do. I think he sees that this end is being brought about not only by European persistency, but also by a certain amount of half-heartedness, and desire to kick over the traces, as it were, of some of his own

followers; and this is not confined to those in out-districts who acknowledge him as their head, but is also noticeable amongst those who are under his own eye (notably Ngatimaniapoto). Such being the case, it is only natural that he should desire to satisfy himself of the exact state of affairs by personal inspection, and that he can only do by travel.

It was well known that when the King movement was first started, and Potatau was elected King by unanimous consent, that not only did Waikato and Ngatimaniapoto, but nearly all the tribes in the North Island, with the exception of Ngapuhi, the Arawa, and Ngatiporou, acknowledge him as their head, and handed over their lands into his keeping, professedly with the intention of keeping them intact, and from falling into the hands of the pakeha by purchase. The fighting against us, and the subsequent confiscation, was a matter that was not taken into account by them at the time the King movement was first started. So universal was this handing over their lands to the King, and with it supposedly the allegiance of the people, that Tawhiao and his immediate followers during subsequent years have continued to imagine, or caused it for political purposes to be understood that they imagined that the compact still held good; certainly the tribes in other districts, so far as I know or have heard, have never formally withdrawn themselves and their lands from the King and Cause. In fact, as has been continually brought before his immediate notice, the very opposite has been the case, for, whenever delegates from these tribes have attended the periodical meetings called by the King, they have, as a rule, been profuse in their expressions of allegiance and willingness to leave their lands in his keeping, notwithstanding that it was well known to Europeans and others of the districts from which they came, that they and those whom they represented had virtually long since separated from the King, were managing their affairs themselves, and had sold or were perhaps then selling or leasing their lands to whomsoever they thought fit, without reference to Tawhiao or any one else outside themselves.

I think we may safely say that Tawhiao, although he must have known such was the case, still, for the purpose of keeping the cause together, kept on ignoring the fact. Things, however, are changed now, and he sees the end is coming; and I think that, in order to get out of the position gracefully and with credit to himself, and possibly with the idea of putting himself in the position to accept terms should they again be offered to him by the Government, he is now travelling through the country, and visiting the people who—and whose fathers now dead—assisted five-and-twenty years ago in putting up Potatau as King, and swore allegiance to him, and also at that time handed over their lands to his keeping. The changes that he has seen and will see during his travels will, I think, put him in a position to say by-and-by, should he decide to say so, that “Those who put me up have now deserted and ceased to support me; those who gave their lands into my keeping have since disposed of them without consulting me; surely they cannot be followers of mine, and I cannot any longer be representing them.” In fact, I think it will be patent to him that those who have through all been true to him are only the few that live in his own now circumscribed district. Under those circumstances, I think he could then say, with dignity, to himself, “Seeing that I am now virtually deserted, I shall resign, or give up my former position as King, and make the best terms I can for myself and the few people remaining to me.” The above is my opinion of the cause of Tawhiao’s present action in travelling through the country.

The formal opening of Kawhia, in February last, by the Hon. the Native Minister, accompanied by the Hon. Mr. Rolleston, and the taking possession of a piece of Government land there, known as Pouewe, which has since been surveyed as a township, was another event which must go plainly to show the Natives how much the policy of Government has changed during the last few years, and how we are slowly but surely gaining strength and ascendancy, whilst they are proportionately losing ground. They do see this, I am sure, and they also see that they are powerless to stop it, especially when, as they watch what takes place, they see that everything that is being done is done in accordance with law and right, and, in some cases, even in accordance with their own Maori customs. To have attempted to throw open Kawhia Harbour and occupy the land upon its shores some years ago would have brought about for the time being an open rupture with the Natives, notwithstanding that our right there was as good then as it is now; but circumstances are changed, and the Natives, instead of obstructing us by force of arms, now quietly look on and let things which they cannot help take their course. Sometimes (as in the case of the chief Hone Wetere, at Kawhia,) they even welcome us, and render us every assistance.

After the opening of Kawhia, the next step taken by the Government was the pardoning of Te Kooti and other Natives who had committed crimes which, although in some cases—especially that of Te Kooti—were of a most ferocious and savage nature, were, under the Amnesty Act, looked upon as semi-political. A meeting was held at Manga-o-Rongo in February last, at which Te Kooti was present, when, after making satisfactory promises as to his future good conduct, he was formally pardoned by Mr. Bryce. It is only fair to say that, whatever may have been the nature of the crimes committed by him shortly after his escape from the Chatham Islands, he has during the last twelve years lived a very quiet and peaceable life at Te Kuiti, no graver offence than that of drunkenness having been laid to his charge during that time.

By the pardoning of a man like Te Kooti an important obstruction to the opening of the King Country has been removed, for, with Te Kooti and his people living at Te Kuiti, it would have been almost impossible that the country could have been occupied with safety, or public works carried on, as it would have been necessary for safety’s sake to first take Te Kooti or drive him out of the district before settlement could follow, and Te Kooti, of course, would have resisted any attempts at arrest. By pardoning him that difficulty is got over, and Te Kooti, instead of being a source of strength to the King people, is now, if not entirely on the European side, certainly neutral. My own opinion is that, should anything occur hereafter in which it is found necessary on our part to use force to bring about a desired result, Te Kooti, if he takes any side at all, will take it with us. Unless, however, he gives up the drinking habits to which he is now almost a slave, he will not live very long. He is also a victim to asthma, from which he suffers a great deal, and that, accelerated by drink, will soon

make an end of him. Since being pardoned he has left Te Kuiti, where he has lived for more than twelve years. He now resides at a place called Otewa, between Kihikihi and Te Kuiti, and about fourteen miles from the former.

By far the most stirring event, mingled with alarm, that has taken place during the past year, was the seizing and tying up of Mr. C. W. Hursthouse, Government Surveyor, and his companion, Mr. Newsham, by a section of Natives who go by the name of Tekau-ma-rua, or Twelve (apostles). They were led on and incited by one of their number named Te Mahuki, who belongs to a hapu called Ngatikinohaku, which is a sub-tribe of the Ngatimaniapoto, and who reside principally at a settlement called Te Kumi, about three miles from Te Kuiti. This affair has since been known as the "Te Mahuki outrage," and has been fully reported in the papers. This people, who go under the name of Tekau-ma-rua, are disciples of and believers in Te Whiti and Tohu, of Parihaka renown. Some of them—including Te Mahuki, who was one of the imprisoned political ploughmen—had for some time been sojourners at Parihaka, and were therefore thoroughly influenced by, and were believers in, the "prophet." After their expulsion from Parihaka, at the time of Te Whiti and Tohu's arrest, they were returned by Government to Waikato, where they belonged, and, in coming, brought their doctrines and beliefs with them.

Te Mahuki, who is a consumptive, cunning-looking Native, of about thirty-five years of age, of unprepossessing appearance, but gifted with considerable glibness of speech, at once took the lead, installed himself as representative of Te Whiti, and their settlement (Te Kumi) was speedily formed into a miniature Parihaka. They built their houses in the same way and in the same positions relatively to each other as were those at Parihaka; their modes of living, their speeches, their songs, their prayers, and their continuous reading of the Old Testament—the New Testament, with the exception of the book of Revelations, does not form any part of their religion—were just the same as when they were at Parihaka; in fact, all the surroundings were such as to keep the original converts from growing lukewarm, and the attractions which Parihaka presented in the shape of plenty of food and the society of "lovely woman" were also there in abundance to assist in gaining new converts to the cause.

These people are noted for their industry, but I do not think their industry is genuine, or that they are so industrious from choice, but merely because it is necessary for the success of their teachings that one of the attractions shall be plenty of food—hence their industry in order to provide what is necessary. Since their return from Parihaka, and after they found that they had got a footing in this district, they were presumptuous enough to suggest to the Waikatos and Ngatimaniapotos that they should desert Tawhiao and their own chiefs, and adopt the Te Whiti doctrine, of which they were the exponents, but this proposal was scouted by the majority of the Natives, although a few proselytes from both those tribes have been made by them.

So far as I can learn, these people profess to be actuated by a desire to prevent their land from passing out of their hands; to keep themselves at a distance from the pakeha, in whom they see all that is the cause of their deterioration and destruction, and nothing that can benefit them; to be allowed themselves to conduct all matters that pertain to their own well-being—in fact, to make laws for themselves, and not to be amenable to ours in any way; to be entirely their own masters, and do what they like with their own. They say that they cannot keep us back by force, neither is their position tenable by argument, so, as a sort of forlorn hope, they fall back upon the Old Testament Scriptures, out of which they profess to see signs and get inspirations, which they declare will, if steadfastly believed in and faithfully carried out, enable them to overcome all who are opposed to them. On these points some of them are monomaniacal, some are merely infatuated, whilst others make use of this means in the hope of bringing about a desired end; and the latter are the strong-minded, and therefore the leaders of the others.

Their reason for stopping Mr. Hursthouse was, I think, to show their objection to the mission on which he was proceeding, namely, prospecting for a railway-line, as they say that the introduction of roads and railways over Maori land is only the beginning of the end, and that after those and other signs of civilization are developed in their midst they are powerless to retain their lands, and their destruction as a race follows as a matter of course. If this is really so, these people are entitled to a great deal of not only sympathy but help at our hands; and I think it is incumbent upon us to show to them that not only shall they as a people not suffer through our progress, but that their lands shall be in most cases retained to them, and permanently benefitted by our occupation thereof. If they are really actuated by the before-mentioned desires, it is hard to explain why it was that, in the capture of Messrs. Hursthouse and Newsham, they treated them with such cruelty; and this I can only account for by the fact that they were infatuated to such a degree that they were prepared to do anything that their leader, Te Mahuki, might order them to do. Had he ordered his people to kill the prisoners I believe it would have been done; or had he given orders that they should be treated with the greatest kindness and consideration his orders would have been implicitly obeyed; and the way he acted in the position in which he was placed during that critical time shows, I think, how immeasurably inferior he is to his prototype, Te Whiti. That astute prophet would never, I think, have compromised himself and his cause by action like that of Te Mahuki. I think that Te Mahuki was intoxicated with what he thought was success, or answer to prayer, in being enabled to take the Europeans out from the protection of Wetere and party, and his subsequent action in having them tied up, ill-treated, and kept without food shows, I think, that he had quite "lost his head." His subsequent action in threatening the Hon. the Native Minister and myself at a public meeting also shows, I think, how infatuated he had become; and when he capped all his other extravagances by leading his men into Alexandra, with the professed intention of doing what he liked when he got there, I think it will be pretty generally admitted that the arrest of himself and party was the best thing that could have happened not only for the public but for themselves also. Some people have made a great deal of the fact that because they came into Alexandra without arms their intentions were peaceable; but this can hardly be the case when we find them

coming in such a large body, and the fact of their commencing their entry into the town by tying up one of the citizens whom they caught on the road, and keeping him a prisoner in the tea-tree, was, I think, only a foretaste of what they would have done had there not been a sufficient force at Alexandra to arrest them. It must also be borne in mind that they were unarmed when they captured Messrs. Hursthouse and Newsham; but that nevertheless their treatment of them was none the less cruel. It is to be hoped that the term of imprisonment that some of them are now undergoing will have a good effect upon them; but I must say that I am rather dubious about the result. The only thing that will completely keep down infatuated Natives of their class will be the opening-up of the country and populating the same with Europeans.

The journey of the Hon. the Native Minister through the King country, from Alexandra to Mokau and Taranaki, was an event of no little importance in the eyes of the Natives as well as of the Europeans, and it was some time after the Natives had realized the fact that Mr. Bryce intended to undertake it that they could be got to look upon it with favour. There was no objection to myself as Native Agent, or even some others well known to the Natives, going through the country, but for a Minister of the Crown to do so was looked upon by them, not only as a bold proceeding, but in their eyes it had a much more important signification, viz., that after that journey their country would be virtually open to all, and could no longer be looked upon as closed. At first they objected to the journey taking place, but finally withdrew their objection, and welcomed Mr. Bryce and party whenever they appeared at the different settlements on the road. The journey was accomplished from beginning to end without the least hitch or anything unpleasant occurring.

The social condition of the Natives in the Waikato District is at a very low ebb. They are poor in pocket, poor in possessions, and, worse than all, they are poor in health. A large number, both of the young and old people, are continually being supplied with medicine at the Government expense. The diseases from which the elderly people suffer are principally asthma, lumbago, and inflammation of the lungs. The children are afflicted with all the sickness that childhood is heir to, and which, on account of poor food and scanty clothing to protect them from the cold, frequently carries them off, when, under more favourable circumstances, they might have been saved. A great many in middle life are not by any means strong, as shown by the hacking cough with which they are afflicted. The King Natives, that is those of them who live at Whatiwhatihoe, near Alexandra, are much given to drunkenness, but this cannot be so much wondered at when Tawhiao himself sets them such a bad example.

The only public work in this district at present being carried on is a road from Aotea to Kawhia. I am informed that a number of Natives are employed at this work, but I have not yet had time to visit that part of my district.

#### *Hauraki or Thames District.*

During the past year the Natives of the Thames District have conducted themselves in such a peaceable and matter-of-fact way that there is little to report upon in connection with them, more than to say that they have continued—with one or two exceptions—to deserve the character for sobriety which I attributed to them in my last year's report. The same may also be said with regard to agricultural pursuits; they are industrious only up to a certain point, viz., the supplying themselves with food necessary for their subsistence; beyond that they do not think it worth while to consider, and in some cases they even prefer to spend all their time in the bush-ranges searching for kauri gum, with the proceeds of the sale of which they purchase food, and thereby do away almost altogether with the necessity of growing it, or, at most, only to a small extent. This absenting themselves from their homes and cultivations is to be accounted for in a great measure by the high prices that have been ruling for gum during the last twelve months, and I think that, when that source of income fails, which it must eventually do, with their increased habits of sobriety, they will once more turn their attention to cultivating for their maintenance the land still remaining to them. The above remarks apply more particularly to the Natives of Shortland and vicinity, including the settlements of Kirikiri, Puriri, and Hikutaia.

The Natives of Ohinemuri (the Ngatitamatera) and those of Te Aroha hardly deserve such a good character as regards sobriety, those of Te Aroha particularly being noted for habits of intemperance. Prohibition orders against supplying liquor to three of them have had to be issued out of the Resident Magistrate's Court during the past year. This tribe (the Ngatirahiri) have for some time been noted as a very improvident people, and unless they mend their ways will ere long be a source of trouble in the district. They have already sold all their land, excepting the reserves that were made to them out of Te Aroha Block, and nearly all these they have leased at such a low rate as to be of little or no use in providing them with the means of sustenance, so that before long they will be dependent upon their relatives in other tribes—unless, indeed, they turn over a new leaf, and, taking pattern from their European neighbours, go to work for a living.

Death has been busy amongst the Natives of this peninsula during the past year, but mostly amongst the young, only two people of rank having been carried off, viz., Hohepa Paraone, of whose demise I informed you in March last, and Harata Patene, generally known to her European friends as Charlotte Barton. As I went fully into Hohepa Paraone's history and life in a previous letter, I need not do more here than say that he was a man of some sixty-five years of age, of the first rank of Ngatimaru chiefs, a Native teacher and a Christian, and generally liked and esteemed by all his people. Harata Patene, or Charlotte Barton, belonged to the Ngatihura section of the Ngatipaoa tribe, and was the relict of the late Patene Puhata, who during his lifetime was a chief and assessor of that tribe. Charlotte was a dame of considerable rank and influence amongst her people, and was much respected by the Europeans with whom she came into contact. She, like her late husband, has often exerted herself in assisting the Government in carrying out its policy amongst her people, and I am sure that both Messrs. Mackay and Puckey, the gentlemen who represented the

Government amongst the Thames Natives previous to my holding that position, will speak with praise of the assistance that Charlotte has often rendered them, and will be grieved to hear of her death. Her sickness was not of long duration, and was brought about by her having run a nail into her foot, which caused great pain and swelling to the whole of the leg, and which eventually resulted in her death.

The diseases from which the Hauraki Natives have suffered during the past year have been principally epidemic, viz., measles in July and scarlet fever in December. Fortunately, neither of these diseases committed as much havoc amongst them as it was feared they would do, thanks to the efficient medical assistance that was called in as soon as the diseases were discovered. Had scarlet fever obtained a firm hold amongst them it is difficult to say what would have been the result, as, what with the want of drainage always found round Native settlements, and the collective and confined way in which they live, such an infectious disease could not have been stamped out before it had carried off a large number of them as its victims.

I am pleased to be able to report a change of feeling on the part of some of the Natives regarding the subject of education. The Natives of a settlement called Kirikiri, near Shortland, seeing the necessity of educating their young people, have, during the past year, applied to the Government for a Native school, and the same has been erected and is now daily attended by the Native and European children in the district. The site for the school and teacher's residence—about four and a half acres—was given by the Natives under "The Native School Sites Act, 1880," and the regular attendance of the Native children at school shows that the parents now appreciate the advantage of having the means of educating their children in their midst. W. H. Taipari, Hoani Nahe, and Hori Matene are the Natives who gave the land for a school-site, and who have taken an active part from the commencement in getting a school established in that locality. Mr. R. O. Stewart, formerly of Tolago Bay, has been appointed to take charge, and from what I can learn he is well liked by the Natives, and the school is likely to be a success.

A sitting of the Native Land Court was held at Paeroa, Ohinemuri, in the months of April and June last, at which the Crown's title to the Ohinemuri Gold Field Block—that is, so much of it as had been purchased from the Native owners—was settled. After a protracted sitting an area of about 65,000 acres out of 73,000 acres was awarded to the Crown, the remainder—representing the interests of owners who up to that time had refused to sell—was allocated, according to arrangement made in Court, by the Government representative and the Native owners, within the different blocks of which those unsold interests originally formed part. The reserves for the Natives were also fixed by the Court and amounted to 10 per cent. out of the area of land that each Native had sold to the Crown at the time he or she disposed of their interest. The Court ordered the title to these reserves to be inalienable. As it is thought desirable that the Government should own the whole of this gold field, excepting of course the reserves, the purchase of the before-mentioned unsold shares has been pushed on since the Court sat, and a considerable area of the same has since become Crown property.

At a sitting of the Native Land Court at the Thames, in January, 1882, the long outstanding Piako Block was called on, but very little was done towards putting it on a satisfactory footing. The large sum of £21,000 has been expended on this block during the last ten years (principally during the years 1873 to 1878), nearly all of which was advanced to members of the Ngatipaoa tribe, numbers of whom are now dead; but unfortunately these people only own about one-half of the block, the other half being owned by the Ngatimaru, Ngatihako, and Ngatitamatera tribes—the former being considerably the largest owner—and they have had little or no advances. The Ngatipaoa, who had received nearly all the money (or rather goods), and spent it, had therefore no interest in surveying their portion and putting it through the Court, or in endeavouring in any way to bring about a settlement, as it was quite apparent to them that they had nothing more to get in the way of payment, and consequently they were in no hurry to commence a survey of the portion claimed by them, which, seeing the large sums of money that had been advanced to them, they out of good faith should have done. They would neither make a survey themselves, nor give evidence in Court as to their boundaries in order that a survey might be made by the Government; and, as a last resource, the Ngatimaru people (whose boundary abuts upon that of Ngatipaoa) had to be prevailed upon to go into Court and have the line fixed by their evidence alone. The Ngatipaoa, under Wini Kerei, their leader, showed their objection to this proceeding by leaving the Court in a body as soon as the first witness for Ngatimaru stood up to give evidence, thereby leaving it to be understood that they claim the right hereafter to reopen the question of the tribal boundary between themselves and Ngatimaru. The boundary was, however, given by Ngatimaru in Court, but, as it could only be fixed approximately on the map, there yet remained the task of laying it off on the ground, and this it has up to the present been found difficult to do. The locality in which the most difficulty is experienced is on the east bank of the Piako River, and working eastwards through to the Turua Bush. In this locality others than Ngatimaru own the land, and it is to them we have to look to get the correct boundary fixed. The erstwhile troublesome Ngatihako have claims here, and they have to be consulted, and they have refused to point out the boundary unless a meeting of all concerned first takes place, and a general assent to the survey is given by all the owners of the land. There appears to be a great deal of objection amongst the Natives all round to this survey, principally because nearly all the payment was given to the Ngatipaoa tribe, and other tribes profess to be now fearful that, should the land owned by Ngatipaoa not be found sufficient to pay for what has been had, some of their portions will be taken to make up the deficiency. In fact, Ngatimaru say they would not have gone into Court and given the boundary had they not been first promised by the Under-Secretary of the Land Purchase Department that they should be allowed to return in cash the small advances (about £100) had by them, and that the prohibition proclamation against private purchase, at present over the whole of the Piako Block, should be removed from their portion.

The Ngatihako tribe, which during the last four or five years has been the only one of the Hauraki tribes that has caused much trouble and anxiety, have during the last year been exceptionally quiet, which is, I think, to be accounted for on the following grounds: First, that really they are not naturally a bad people, and it is principally through their having been unsuccessful in proving titles to land which they had looked upon as their own, and their seeing this land sold over their heads, and also their having been more or less what is commonly called "sat upon" by other tribes, that caused them to take up the position and act in the way they did—that is, set the law at defiance by shooting and wounding a surveyor. Secondly, the events that have been taking place round about them during the last eighteen months—for instance, the taking the snags out of the Waihou River, which was done literally "under their very noses," for they were living on the banks of the river, and could see the operations going on every day, and also the great change—I might almost say collapse—that has taken place lately in connection with King Tawhiao and his power. As it was the King and his policy of opposition and isolation that they adopted and carried out, I think I am right in saying that anything happening to strengthen or weaken the King party would proportionately affect them. Thirdly, but what has most of all caused them to pause and consider was the arrest and trial of their two leading men, Pakara te Paoro and Epiha Taha, who were accused of shooting at and wounding young McWilliams whilst engaged in the survey of the Pukehange Block at Ohinemuri in August, 1879. For a long time after the crime was committed no attempt was made to arrest the culprits, and in all probability they began to think they were safe, but unfortunately for them their case was only another proof—and the Natives have now had several—that the law is patient and has a long and powerful arm. Their arrest by a party of constables when coming down the Waipa River in a canoe, within only a few miles of Tawhiao's settlement, must have considerably opened their eyes as to the limit and power of the law, and must have also considerably lessened their estimate of the power of Tawhiao and of the gods, under whose protection they used to boast they were, to protect them. This exhibition of power and firmness evidently "staggered" them, and a subsequent act of mercy on the part of the Hon. the Native Minister "brought them down," viz., the releasing from gaol of Epiha Taha, under the Amnesty Act, after he had been in prison only six months out of a term of three years allotted to him by the Supreme Court. I am of opinion that these people will not cause any further trouble by breaking the law out of objection and opposition to it, and that, by a little good management and recognition of their position as a tribe in cases where surveys and other matters emanating from the progress of civilization are concerned, there should be no difficulty in getting them to live as a peaceable and law-abiding people.

There has been very little crime all through the Hauraki District during the past year, the Natives mostly confining their breaking of the law to drunkenness, petty larceny, and the minor crimes. There have been at the Thames during the last twelve months four convictions for drunkenness, three for threatening and obscene language, two for larceny, and one for assault. At Te Aroha there have been six for drunkenness and one for provoking and insulting language. At Paeroa there has been one case of disorderly conduct and breach of the Vagrant Act.

There have been no public works upon which the Natives have been employed during the past year.

I have, &c.,

GEORGE T. WILKINSON,

Government Native Agent, Thames, Auckland, and Waikato.

The Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.