

1885.
NEW ZEALAND.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS IN NATIVE DISTRICTS.

[In Continuation of G.—1, 1884.]

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.

SIR,—

Native Office, Wellington, 25th March, 1885.

I am directed by the Hon. the Native Minister to request that you will be good enough to forward to this office, on or before the 30th proximo, a report, for presentation to Parliament, on the state of the Natives in your district.

Mr. Ballance desires that your report should contain the fullest information that you can furnish as to the social, political, and physical state of the Natives; whether they are increasing, their progress in industrial pursuits, and generally as to any matter that may be of public interest concerning them.

I have, &c.,

T. W. LEWIS,
Under-Secretary.

No. 2.

S. VON STÜRMER, ESQ., R.M., Hokianga, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Resident Magistrate's Office, Hokianga, 20th April, 1885.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your Circular Letter of the number and date noted in the margin (No. 3, 25th March, 1885), requesting me to forward my usual annual report upon the state of the Natives in this district for presentation to Parliament, and now beg to forward the report herewith.

I have, &c.,

SPENCER VON STÜRMER,
Resident Magistrate.

The Under Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

REPORT.

There is but little change in the condition of the Natives in this district during the past year. The health of the people has been fairly good, and no epidemic of any kind has visited the district. The births reported have been slightly in excess of the deaths, but, notwithstanding this, I am inclined to believe that the Native population is slowly, but steadily, on the decrease. Deaths of both adults and infants take place on the gum fields and elsewhere of which no report is made. The present generation does not appear to be nearly so healthy or robust as that which is passing away. This may, I am inclined to think, be owing to the fact that the Natives of to-day are not as provident or industrious as those of former times. They do not cultivate and store up supplies of food for winter use as extensively as their ancestors did, relying, as they now do, upon the sale of land, timber, or some other article, to make up for any deficiency when a time of scarcity arrives. Thus the children often suffer from an insufficiency of wholesome food in cold winter and spring weather, when it is most needed, and so lay the foundation of future weakness and disease. This, together with the removal of their settlements from the high to low-lying lands, may in some measure account for the change. There is an excellent work, "Health for the Maori," written by J. H. Pope, Esq., and supplied to the Native schools, which, if translated into the language and distributed amongst the adult Native population would, I feel sure, be productive of much good, for they are sadly in need of some radical change in their sanitary and domestic arrangements, all of which are so admirably explained in the work alluded to. I am very glad to be able to say that drunkenness, which used to be so common amongst the Natives in this district, is now hardly ever seen; but gambling still prevails, more particularly among the younger men. As a body, they are as well-behaved and law-abiding as the Europeans. The number of civil cases brought before the Resident Magistrate's Court in which Natives only were concerned being six, in which one party only was a Native—one hundred and twenty-two, and five Natives have been punished for minor offences. They