

are now trying to work "The Native Committees Act, 1883," and seem anxious for local self-government, and, though as loyal as it is possible to be, take a great interest, and to some extent sympathise with the doings of Te Whiti, Tawhiao, and other Maori agitators. Unlike the Waikato and some Southern Natives, they have great confidence in the Native Land Court, and are most anxious to individualize the title to their lands. The Waikato chief Tawhiao is expected on a visit to the Bay of Islands during the present month, and intends holding a meeting at Waitangi; and though some of our Natives may attend out of curiosity, very few will take an active interest in the proceedings. The Native schools, of which there are ten in Hokianga, are working well and doing much good, and are a source of much satisfaction to those who have the interest of the Maori at heart, for it is to these schools that we must look for the future advancement of the Native race. Many of the more intelligent of the young men are now learning professions and mechanical trades, for which they show great aptitude. I think every encouragement should be given to them in this most important matter, bearing as it does on the future welfare of the Maori. Early in March, Maria Pungari, a Native woman, residing near Kaikohe, Bay of Islands, assumed the role of a prophetess, foretelling the end of the world and other changes to take place on or before the 31st of the month. Large numbers of Natives from all parts flocked to her settlement, amongst others nearly all the Natives from the village of Upper Waihou, Hokianga, who at the same time disposed of a quantity of cattle and food for a mere tithe of their value. They waited patiently at Maria's settlement until the predicted time expired, and have now returned to their homes, sadder and wiser men, blaming themselves for their folly in believing the prediction made, and not the woman who misled them. I am glad to say that no other Natives from this district were led away by the so-called prophetess. The crops have been very good, and a small quantity of wheat has been grown at Lower Waihou, but I hardly expect to see the experiment repeated, as the sparrows and other small birds gave a vast amount of trouble and reduced the yield. Tobacco is now grown as a regular crop in nearly every settlement, and is a real success, very little of the imported article being used. A very large portion of the moneys expended by the County Council in public works is earned by the Natives, who are excellent workmen, they tendering for contracts on the same footing as their European neighbours; and could they only become a little more provident in their habits they might yet rise to a good position in the State. One of the greatest difficulties under which they labour is the great facility with which they obtain credit. Once in debt, their whole energies become cramped, and they seem to be careless of themselves and lose all heart to work; yet, knowing the trouble which debt entails, they appear quite powerless to resist the temptation, and sacrifice their whole future for some very trifling present gratification. It is a great pity legislation cannot be brought to bear on this subject. If a change in this matter could be made, and the title of Native lands be individualised, there would be very little work for magistrates to do amongst them. In concluding this report, I beg to state that the condition of the Natives residing in this large district may, as a whole, be considered most satisfactory.

SPENCER VON STÜRMER,
Resident Magistrate.

No. 3.

H. W. BISHOP, Esq., R.M., Mangonui, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Resident Magistrate's Office, Mangonui, 30th April 1885.

In obedience to the instructions conveyed in your Circular Letter, No. 3, of the 25th ultimo, I have the honor to report upon the state of the Natives in my district as follows:—

The health of the people has been a great improvement upon what it was during the period covered by my last annual report, but a few settlements have still been visited by fever of a contagious type. It is very satisfactory, however, to note that the fatality has been very slight in proportion to the number of cases. The settlements visited by the epidemic have been Kareponia, Awanui, Pamapurua and Mangataore, but at the present time I may safely say that all those attacked are convalescent. Upon the whole I think that the past year has been a good one, so far as the general health of the Maoris is concerned. Supplies of drugs have been furnished by the Native Office to the Rev. Joseph Matthews of Kaitaia, and to the teachers of the Native schools at Awanui, Pukepoto, Ahipara and Kaeo, and these have been intelligently and beneficially dispensed by the persons in charge. The Natives have very largely availed themselves of the privilege thus given, of obtaining medicines free of cost, and I am aware that they prize considerably such privilege, and have perfect confidence in the ability of the dispensers.

In my last report I went so fully into what I considered the causes of these periodical epidemics amongst the Maoris, that it is not necessary that I should repeat my remarks here, so long as the people persist in living in such unhealthy localities, and in generally disregarding the most ordinary, and easily understood sanitary laws, just so long will they be specially liable to disease, which will be unerringly fatal. One or two instances have lately been brought to my notice, where families have been living in unhealthy swampy situations, and having had members attacked by fever, have immediately migrated for a time to a healthy, airy *kainga*, open to the fresh sea-breezes. The result has invariably been that the fever was confined to the first victims, or else that others affected, have had it in a much less severe form. I am hopeful that in course of time, the experience so dearly bought in the past, may prove of lasting benefit in the future, and that the eyes of many of the people may be opened to the fact, that to a great extent, the remedy for the deplorable state of things, which if allowed to continue, would very shortly be the means of decimating the race, lies in their own hands. Cases like those quoted above, cannot fail to make an impression upon all thinking Maoris.

They have been much disposed in the past to regard the great mortality from fever which has occurred, in a superstitious manner, and to conclude that they were a doomed people. I have endeavoured earnestly, upon all possible occasions, to point out to them the utter foolishness and