

recklessness of such reasoning, and have urged that in physique and general healthiness, they are highly favoured, and that there is no possible reason why, if they obeyed the counsels of those who have their best interests at heart, they should not be able to ward off sickness and disease, as well as (as they are so apt to say) we pakehas do. When Mr. Pope's excellent little work, "Health for the Maori," is translated and freely circulated amongst the Natives, all the various points to which their attention should be directed, will be brought more ably and prominently before them, and the result should be in every way beneficial.

Generally speaking, the Natives throughout my district are poor. They can always earn sufficient and more than sufficient money, in one way or another, to keep themselves, but they never seem to accumulate, and everything is frittered away to-day, without regard to to-morrow. Kauri gum is still obtained in large quantities, and the procuring of this product affords employment during some portion of the year to members of every family in the district. Prices have been ruling somewhat low, but the supply does not seem to have been affected thereby, and large quantities of gum have been procured from the various fields. Gum may truly be described as the great stand-by of Natives in the North. They can never want while this is procurable, and a visit to the gum-fields for a few weeks provides enough to live on for some time, without the necessity of doing any work. Both physically and morally the effect is bad. Physically, because often the whole population, men, women, and children, turn out and live on the swampy ground, either in miserable whares or in dilapidated tents, often wet through—always damp, and living on wretched food, thus laying the sure foundation of subsequent disease. Morally, because knowing that gum is so easily procurable, and pays so well, they neglect their homes and the education of their children, and render themselves unfit for any settled employment. The proof of this is to be seen in the various settlements, and when gum gets really scarce, I fear that a bitter lesson will have to be learnt.

A number of the young men get constant employment in the various kauri bushes. They make splendid bushmen, and are in demand by contractors. Very fair wages are paid, and the men appear to be well off. Some enterprising individual at times essays to take a large bush contract, and at first everything goes on in a flourishing manner, but soon the want of capital bears him down, until, in many instances, he is glad to get quit of his contract at any loss. Occasionally, one may make money and do well, but the reverse is generally the case.

Whaling is carried on with great enthusiasm during the season by the Natives living in the Coast Settlement. The equipment of the several boats is very complete, and must entail considerable expense. The Natives show great aptitude in following this industry, but, unfortunately, very little success was met with last year, whales being scarce.

The small quantity of land under cultivation by Natives throughout the district is very noticeable, and when I compare the present state of things with that of previous years, I cannot but regard it as a matter for deep regret. A few small patches of potatoes, *tukau*, *taro*, and corn, can be seen dotted about here and there, but no systematic effort is made to farm the tracts of splendid land lying waste in every direction. Some of the inland Natives grow enough tobacco to supply their own wants, but the crop is not raised in any quantity.

A general wish exists amongst the Natives to have their titles to lands individualized. This wish is not on account of a desire to sell, but simply because each man has a decided opinion that it would be better for him in every way to have a separate Crown grant for his own piece of land, in preference to being a tenant in common with others. In my annual report for the year 1883, I touched upon this matter, and stated then my opinion that it would benefit the Natives if increased facilities were placed in their way to individualize their titles. Time has seemed to strengthen this opinion. The expense at present attendant upon procuring a subdivision of a block of land, necessitating an immediate outlay, is, in most cases, far too heavy to be met by the Native owners. In a report of this description it is impossible to go very fully into the reasons which can be urged for facilitating subdivision, and in a sense thereby making each Native a separate freeholder, but I am decidedly of opinion that it would, in the end, have the effect of doing more to break up the mischievous system of communism than anything else that could be suggested. *Huis*, *hakaris*, &c., would then be almost impossible, and thus the popular means of impoverishment would be done away with. If the *kaingas* especially were subdivided into lots, say, of ten acres, each Native owner would feel more interest in improving his holding, instead of feeling, as he does at present, that let him work ever so hard, he will never be one penny better off for his labour, for others will reap the benefit.

I am very pleased to be able to record the continued sobriety of the people as a whole. This is apparent throughout the North, and is exceedingly gratifying to those persons who take an interest in the welfare of the Natives, and who are able to look back to the state of things existing a few years ago.

Another point well worthy of note is the freedom of this district from all crime of a serious nature. Minor offences there always will be amongst a population so large as there is here, but the past year shows a gratifying comparison with previous years. When cases do arise requiring the intervention of the authorities, I, as a rule, meet with the greatest assistance and co-operation at the hands of the leading Natives, and it is seldom indeed that I find any difficulty in effectively carrying out the law. The Native Assessors are always able and willing to assist me, and I have been much indebted to them at various times for their cordial co-operation. In this respect, Timoti Puhipi, the leading chief of the Rarawa Tribe, is especially worthy of mention.

Two years ago, I could have said with certainty that the Natives in the north were increasing in number, but the ravages made by sickness since then have reduced them somewhat, and I am of opinion that at the present time the race is stationary.

In political matters a great distinction is to be observed between the Ngapuhi Tribe, which people the southern portion of my district, and the Rarawa and Aupouri Tribes, which reside from Mangonui northwards. Whereas the former are constantly in a state of agitation and dissatisfaction,