

Tokaanu; there are not many affected by it, about six cases only being known. The disease is said to be incurable by any remedy known to the Natives, to be hereditary and contagious after long contact. Those affected are kept apart, and have little or no intercourse with the others.

The only industrial pursuits followed by the Natives, are the preparation of flax for ropes and mats, and the manufacture of kiwi and flax mats for sale to Europeans, or presents to other tribes.

Some few years ago, a flour-mill managed by a Native, was being worked at Tokaanu, grinding wheat for home consumption only; but the dam having burst through a flood, has never been repaired, and the mill is now idle, and the machinery rotting for want of care.

D. SCANNELL,
Resident Magistrate.

No. 10.

H. D. JOHNSON, Esq., Government Agent, Rotorua, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Rotorua, 29th April, 1885.

In compliance with your circular, No. 3, of the 25th ultimo, I have the honor to report upon the state of the Natives in the Rotorua District.

As I have not long been resident here, it is perhaps premature to form conclusions. So far, however, I have found the Natives of this district to be generally law-abiding, and tolerably well-disposed to the progress of settlement. Although there are a few individuals who drink intoxicating liquors to excess whenever they get an opportunity, yet, taken as a whole, they may be classed as being temperate—in fact, I am informed that a number of those who, in former times were notorious drunkards, are now total abstainers.

There has been a considerable amount of sickness amongst the Natives during the past three months, chiefly arising from colds, but nothing of an epidemic character, their immunity from which may doubtless, in a great measure, be attributable to the fumes from the hot springs acting as a disinfectant. A few deaths have occurred, resulting from the ordinary ills to which flesh is heir, such as consumption, cancer, dropsy, &c., but I observe that there appears to be a fair proportion of young persons and children, and, from inquiries I have made, I believe that the Natives in this district are not at the present time actually decreasing in number. Their cultivations are scattered about, often at some distance from their settlements, and it is, therefore, not easy to judge of their extent, but I understand that, as a rule, they grow sufficient for their wants. Many of them pay considerable attention to religious exercises, services being held daily. The Bishop of Waiapu lately consecrated a very neat little church at the Native village of Ohinemutu, the Natives belonging to the Church of England having contributed towards the cost of its erection, and the adherents of the Roman Catholic Church are collecting money with the intention of following their example.

With the exception of a case of murder by a lunatic now confined in the Auckland Asylum, there has been an entire absence of serious crime amongst the Natives of this district during the past year. They are beginning to take more interest in the education of their children, and applications for the establishment of additional schools were made to the Hon. Mr. Ballance during his recent visit here, the Natives offering to cede the land required as sites.

It may perhaps be of interest to mention that, on the same occasion, the Hon. Mr. Ballance was asked by several sections of Natives to give assurances that he and his colleagues would uphold the Thermal Springs Act in its integrity, and an application was made to extend the boundary of one of the blocks proclaimed thereunder. The great bulk of the Natives of this district evidently look upon the Act as their sheet-anchor which will save them from themselves. Whenever arrangements are made for the administration of any block of land under the Act, the Governor has power, with the assent of the Native owners, to set apart portions of the same for all public purposes, so that both sides are equally well served. Unfortunately, the long series of litigation in respect of the township leases, and the consequent non-payment of rents, together with the failure of results in connection with the Maraeroa-Oturoa Block, have caused the Natives to hesitate about entering into arrangements with regard to other blocks. Had matters gone on smoothly, I have no doubt that by this time many other blocks would have been handed over by the Native owners for settlement, and that the district would have presented a more thriving appearance. Moderate rental is, of course, an important factor in leasehold tenure, and, if people bid wildly at auction, and bind themselves to pay more for the use of the land than it is fairly worth, they have only themselves to blame. Personally, I think that the present Township lessees are deserving of very little sympathy, but I hope that before another year has elapsed matters will have been settled on a more satisfactory basis. I may mention that the Natives are anxiously looking forward to the completion of the railway which is to bring this wonderland of New Zealand into closer communication with the world at large. Many of them will be glad to find employment in its construction.

I have, &c.,

The Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

H. DUNBAR JOHNSON,
Government Agent.

No. 11.

JAMES BOOTH, Esq., R.M., Gisborne, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Resident Magistrate's Office, Gisborne, 29th April, 1885.

In compliance with the instructions contained in your circular letter, No. 3, of the 25th ultimo,