

they could get from the available Crown lands in the Waikato district at the present time. In a very few weeks the whole of that large area known as the King country will in all probability be before the Native Land Court ; and, from what I know of the intricacies of Native title to land through occupation, intermarriage, gift, &c. (leaving out the great title of conquest), I am of opinion that, by the time the title to the whole of that area (some three million acres) has been investigated, there will be very few Natives at present looked upon as landless who have not been able to acquire an interest, small or great, in part of it. And as when that time arrives the "Native difficulty" will be practically settled, there need not, I think, be any political reason why the Government should give up its Crown lands to Natives unless it should be shown that there are some even at that time who have failed to obtain an interest in any land that has been before the Court, and are therefore landless, and must be provided for. As you are aware, "The Waikato Confiscated Land Act, 1884," expires in November next, and I would suggest that, instead of renewing it for another term, the Natives be notified through the *Kahiti* and by circular that, unless they take advantage of the Act already in force, and which will continue in force until November, after that date the opportunity to become possessed of Crown lands will have passed away. It will be seen during the time between the present and the next sitting of the House whether it is advisable or necessary to bring the Act into force again or not.

Mormons.—During the past year some Mormon elders have been preaching and teaching in different parts of the Waikato District, during which time they made their head-quarters at a settlement called Kaitumutumu, on the west bank of the Waikato River, nearly opposite to the Huntly coal-mines. A number of Natives, more especially those at the Kaitumutumu settlement and some in the locality of Raglan, have professed to be converts, and look upon the Mormon faith and teachings to be the best—because, perhaps, the newest to them—religion extant, and the Mormon way of interpreting the Scriptures the correct one. As there is no semblance of a political element in this—to the Waikato people—new religion I have not interfered with it in any way, as my experience has taught me that to cry down or oppose any religious movement is more likely to strengthen than weaken it, simply from the prominence and notoriety that the action of opposing it would give to it. If let alone its followers will themselves soon test its suitability or not to be permanently supported by them. With Natives, to try and persuade them concerning a matter before they have had time to satisfy themselves about it, or to attempt to coerce them where religion is concerned, is a sure way to court failure.

The following, who were Native pensioners in the Waikato District, have died during the past year : Manuhiri (*alias* Tamati Ngapora, receiving £60 a year), Mata Okeroa (widow of the late Takerei te Rau, receiving £50 a year), and Hariata Ngahiwi (widow of the late Pene Ngahiwi, receiving £15 a year).

I forward herewith a return showing the number of Natives and half-castes within the Auckland, Waikato, Thames, Coromandel, Ohinemuri, and Te Aroha Districts who have been convicted of crime in the different Resident Magistrates' Courts within those districts during the year ended 31st March last : Drunkenness—Mercer, 4 ; Cambridge, 1 ; Te Awamutu, 3 ; Thames, 1 ; Paeroa, 1 ; Alexandra, 1. Larceny—Mercer, 3 ; Te Awamutu, 2 ; Alexandra, 1 ; Kawhia, 1 ; Thames, 1. Wife-desertion—Hamilton, 1. Larceny and housebreaking—Alexandra, 1. Lunacy—Auckland, 1 ; Coromandel, 1. Breach of borough by-laws—Thames, 2. Breach of Impounding Act—Thames, 1. Fighting in street—Paeroa, 3. Prohibition order against drink—Te Aroha, 1. There were five Natives charged at Cambridge Court with libel, and committed to the Supreme Court at Auckland ; but the Chief Judge ordered the charge against them to be dismissed. From these returns it will be seen that amongst the 8,218 (exclusive of those in west Taupo County) Natives which the census just taken shows are living in the above-mentioned districts, only eleven have been punished for drunkenness and eight for larceny during a period of twelve months, the other offences being of a minor character. This speaks volumes, I think, for the Natives as a law-abiding and—to a much greater extent than used to be the case—temperate race.

THAMES-HAURAKI (INCLUDING TE AROHA, OHINEMURI, AND COROMANDEL).

My time has been so much taken up in the Waikato District during the past year that I have not had the opportunity to make more than one or two visits to the Thames during that period, and then only for a short time, so that my report on that district will not be a very voluminous one.

The Hon. the Native Minister, when passing through Te Aroha *en route* for the Thames in November last, had a meeting with the Ngatirahiri Natives at Te Aroha, at which I was present. Their speeches were very friendly, but the subjects upon which they remarked were the same as those brought before the Minister's notice at a large Native meeting which took place at the Thames during February of the preceding year, and referred to some old-standing grievances and complaints that have not yet been remedied.

The Native school at Kirikiri is in a fairly-flourishing condition. The children attend as regularly as can be expected, seeing that the parents do not take the same interest in the education of their children as European parents do. The master (Mr. R. O. Stewart) is very well liked by both Natives and Europeans in the district.

The Natives at Shortland and Parawai have lately had a new church built or, rather, I should say, have built for themselves a new church—upon a piece of land near the old mission-