

1886.
NEW ZEALAND

REPORTS FROM OFFICERS IN NATIVE DISTRICTS.

[In Continuation of G.—2, 1885.]

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, 24th March, 1886.

I have the honour, by direction of the Hon. the Native Minister, to request that you will be good enough to forward to this office at your earliest convenience, but not later than the 30th proximo, the annual report upon the state of the Natives in your district, for presentation to Parliament.

I have, &c.,

T. W. LEWIS,
Under-Secretary.

No. 2.

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

SIR,—

Resident Magistrate's Office, Hokianga, 9th April, 1886.

In reply to your Circular No. 2, of the 24th March, I have the honour to transmit herewith my annual report upon the state of the Natives in this district.

During the year just past there has occurred but little change to report upon in the condition of the Natives in this district. The behaviour of the people has been exceptionally good, and no increase of crime is to be reported upon. In July last the Government survey party at Motukaraka were forcibly stopped work by a party of women. Upon complaint being made, I issued a warrant for the arrest of the ringleader, who, after a short confinement, was fined and released, the tribe giving a guarantee that no further opposition would be made. The survey has since been completed without the least trouble. A few years since a case of this kind would have given serious trouble; but all opposition to lawful authority has ceased to exist among them, and I do not think a more orderly or better-behaved body of people can be found in the colony. The health of the district has been much as usual, and no epidemic has visited it. Among the deaths I am grieved to have to report that of Kereama Tawhai (a son of the well-known chief H. M. Tawhai, of Waima), of consumption. He was a young gentleman of much promise, and just prior to his death was studying the law in the office of Messrs. Whitaker and Russell, of Auckland. Though only twenty-one years of age, he had done much for his countrymen as a lecturer in the cause of temperance. He was beloved and respected by all who knew him, and great sympathy was expressed by Europeans and Natives from all parts of the colony at his early death. The crops in the various settlements have been excellent; but the Natives, I am sorry to say, do not cultivate sufficient for their own use, and depend far too much upon bush-work, gum-digging, and work on the county roads for a means of living, and I fear in some of the kaingas there will be great scarcity during the coming winter. A large religious meeting was held at Matihetihe early in March, but no matters of a political nature were touched upon, and it passed off in the usual quiet manner, though I was sorry to find that a considerable quantity of food was consumed, which will be much needed further on in the season. The Native schools, which are a feature in this district, are still well supported and appreciated by all.

I have, &c.,

SPENCER VON STÜRMER,
Resident Magistrate.

The Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

No. 3.

Mr. J. S. CLENDON, R.M., Whangarei, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Resident Magistrate's Office, Whangarei, 24th April, 1886.

I have the honour, as requested by your letter of the 24th March ultimo, to report, for the information of the Hon. the Native Minister, that the Natives throughout the districts under my charge, comprising Kaipara, Whangarei, and part of the Bay of Islands district, have during the past year being exceedingly quiet, well-behaved, and law-abiding. No disturbances whatever have occurred amongst them, and but very few instances of crime have taken place. They have chiefly occupied themselves in gum-digging and cultivating their lands, and have experienced far less sickness during the past year than in the preceding period. Fevers especially have been less prevalent. From the census lately taken it will be seen that the numbers of the Native people on the whole are about the same as shown in the census returns of 1881, although at some settlements they have perceptibly decreased in numbers. Drunkenness has also steadily decreased among them for some time. The schools have been fairly attended throughout the districts, and the reopening of the Pouto School, with the election of a School Committee, appears to have given great satisfaction, and will lead, without doubt, to beneficial results hereafter, not only in the education of the children, but also in dispelling in a great measure the former morbid disinclination of the elder people to education, or any advancement beyond their original habits.

In conclusion, I beg to express the pleasure I feel at the state of the Natives generally, enabling me to report so favourably of their condition in the district under my supervision.

I have, &c.,

JAMES S. CLENDON,

The Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

Native Agent.

No. 4.

Captain JACKSON, R.M., Razorback, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Razorback, 21st April, 1886.

In accordance with the request contained in your Circular No. 2, of the 24th ultimo, I have the honour to forward my annual report upon the state of the Natives in the district under my charge.

Since my last annual report no change of any importance has taken place amongst the Natives, and their condition is much the same as when reported on by me last year. The Natives have behaved in an orderly manner during the past twelve months, and it is satisfactory to note that drunkenness is decreasing amongst them. In the Police Courts two Natives have been committed for trial on charges of cattle-stealing, two have been convicted summarily of larceny, and two of drunkenness. There have been nine civil cases heard in the Resident Magistrate's Courts, two in which Natives were plaintiffs and Europeans defendants, six in which Europeans were plaintiffs and Natives defendants, and one in which both parties were Natives. The Native crops have in some parts of the district been good, and in others a failure. The Natives on the West Coast, from Manukau Heads to Port Waikato, have had very poor crops: a few of them have grown sufficient for their own consumption, but the greater number have not. The potato crops have been very poor. Not more than two or three families remain constantly on their land; the rest wander about and employ themselves digging kauri-gum, cutting flax, and a few work in flax- and saw-mills. I find from inquiries there have been no deaths, and little or no sickness amongst them. No Native children attend school in this part of my district: the parents say they are waiting until a Native school is opened.

The Natives at the settlements of Tuakau, Mercer, and Kohekohe, situated on the Waikato River, have grown sufficient for their own consumption, but have had no surplus for sale. The potato crop in this part of the district has, on the whole, been good. Potatoes, watermelons, pumpkins, and oats have been cultivated. The Natives at Kohekohe reside on their lands; the rest wander about and employ themselves cutting flax, timber, digging kauri-gum, and a few are employed in swamp-work. Twenty-nine have died during the past twelve months, and several are now suffering from sickness. Six Native children attend district schools—two at Churchill, three at Tuakau, and one at Mercer.

The Natives residing at the settlements of Wairoa South and Maraetai have not grown sufficient food for their own consumption. Their crops have been poor, especially the potatoes at Wairoa South. The crops consisted of potatoes and maize; at Maraetai of potatoes only. These Natives support themselves digging gum, and have no other occupation. They have no sickness amongst them at present, and all seem to have recovered from the disease I reported upon last year. Five Natives have died at Wairoa South during the past twelve months—three from measles, and two from chest-diseases; at Maraetai none have died, and two children attend the district school at this place.

At Papakura there are about sixty non-resident Natives digging gum, and they are making good wages. They come from Whatawhata, Kawhia, Huntly, Mercer, and Muapaia.

I have, &c.,

The Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

THOMAS JACKSON.

No. 5.

Mr. G. T. WILKINSON, Native Agent, Alexandra, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Native Office, Alexandra, 25th May, 1886.

In accordance with the request contained in your Circular No. 2 of the 24th March last, I have the honour to forward herewith my annual report upon the state of the Natives in my districts.

Waikato (including Kawhia, Waipa, and Upper Mokau).

With the exception of the King Natives living at Whatiwhatihoe, the health of the Natives all through this district has been fairly good during the past year. Those, however, living at the above-mentioned settlement, in addition to their ordinary ills, such as coughs, colds, asthma, &c., have suffered from an epidemic of low fever, coupled with a sort of erysipelas in the head, which, when not taken in time, proved in some cases fatal. I think the disease was similar to that which attacked the Parihaka Natives some months ago, but not of such a malignant form. Thanks, however, to the fact that the Government Medical Officer (Mr. Aubin) was close at hand with the necessary skill and medicine to deal with the epidemic, its effects were not nearly so disastrous as they otherwise might have been. The reason why it affected the Whatiwhatihoe Natives more than those of other settlements is, I think, because they are more lazy and dirty in their habits, and are more ill-fed and less properly-clothed than the Natives of most of the other settlements within my district. They seem to spend most of their time, and what little energy they have got, in political meetings, discussions, and plottings, rather than, by industry and labour, providing food and raiment for themselves, their wives, and their families.

There have been a number of circumstances of a more or less eventful character during the past year within this district. In May last the Ngatiraukawa-Ngatimaniapoto chief and pensioner, Rewi Maniapoto, of Kihikihi, gave another exhibition of his fickleness of character and love of change by listening with a willing ear to the beguiling tongue of the Mokau chief, Wetere te Rerenga, who was then, and is now, I believe, a firm believer in and supporter of the quondam prophet Te Whiti. Wetere te Rerenga paid a visit to this district, evidently with a mission; and he so gained the ear of Rewi, and impressed him with his views from a Parihaka standpoint, that he actually persuaded the old gentleman to agree to accompany him—it was said only as far as Waitara; but rumour, which is generally right in matters of this sort, gave out that Rewi's real destination was Parihaka. They proceeded on the journey by going up the Waipa and Manga-o-Kewa Rivers in a canoe as far as Te Kuni, from which place the rest of the journey as far as Totoro, on the Mokau River, had to be made overland. This, however, proved too much for Rewi on account of his old age and feeble health, so, after staying two or three weeks at Te Kuni, he returned to his home at Kihikihi, time and circumstances having again caused the old man to change his mind. Notwithstanding his age (about eighty) his health has been very good of late—so much so that he has been able to attend the Land Court that was held a short time since at Taupo, and to look after some of his land-claims that were being dealt with by that Court.

On the 5th August last the well-known old chief Manuhiri, or Tamati Ngapora (the name he was formerly known by), died at Whatiwhatihoe at an advanced age. It is said that he was able to bear firearms at the time of the Ngapuhi invasion of Waikato and the attack on the Matakitaiki Pa, near Alexandra, which took place in 1821. Allowing him, therefore, to be about sixteen years old at that time, he would be about eighty at the time of his death. As I gave you a short sketch of his history when I wrote informing you of his death, I need not dwell further upon the subject now.

During the month of August I paid a visit to the Matahuru Valley district, and on to Upper Piako, in consequence of some obstruction that had been offered by the Natives of those localities to Mr. Charles Stevens, a surveyor, who was engaged in making some Government surveys in that district. I was able, before leaving, to get the Natives to cease obstructing; but a question cropped up during a meeting I had with the Upper Piako Natives at Te-hoe-a-Tainui settlement, which showed there is a misunderstanding on the part of either those Natives or the Government as to the ownership of a block of land containing some seven thousand acres adjoining the Te-hoe-a-Tainui settlement. The Natives claim it as a reserve given to them by Mr. James Mackay and Dr. Pollen some years ago; but the Government appear to look upon it as Crown land. I made inquiry, and reported fully to you upon the matter on my return to my office. I have not, however, yet been informed what decision the Government has come to regarding the question at issue.

It was also in the month of August that some of the Ngatihaua Natives living at Maungakawa caused some local excitement by forcibly obstructing the contractor (Mr. Fallon) for a portion of the Morrinsville-Rotorua Railway line. They assembled at a railway-bridge for the purpose of preventing his men from laying the rails over it. A regular *fracas* occurred, and one young Native was injured, but not seriously, by being thrown from the bridge. An attempt was also made by the Natives to demolish the bridge by chopping one or more of the piles with an axe. The obstruction was of such a determined nature that the contractor had to go into Hamilton and take out warrants for the arrest of the ringleaders. Sergeant-Major McGovern,

accompanied by two constables, proceeded to the scene of action, and after some talk succeeded in getting the men they wanted to give themselves up and come into Hamilton. They were bailed out until the case came on for hearing, when, strange to say, the charge against them was withdrawn, and the engineer for the railway (Mr. Stewart), acting, I presume, on behalf of the Rotorua Railway Company, gave a dinner at which the offending Natives, the contractor, the engineer, and others were present. The engineer made a speech in which he admitted that there were errors and faults on both sides, and the whole affair ended apparently in a good feeling being established between the contending parties. The reason of the trouble is, I understand, because the Natives will not accept a reasonable sum that the company are prepared to give them for a portion of their land that has been taken for the railway. The Natives, on the other hand, demand an exorbitant price, which the company refuse to give, and the Natives will not take the initiative in having the matter referred to arbitration.

During the early part of November the Hon. Mr. Ballance visited Alexandra, and met Wahanui and other members of the Ngatimaniapoto Tribe, also some representative chiefs from Kawhia. A large meeting of Ngatimaniapoto was being held at that time at Te Kuiti, some thirty miles south of Alexandra, and it was hoped by the Natives that Mr. Ballance would meet them there; but the short time at his disposal, and the roughness of the road or track between Alexandra and Te Kuiti, precluded him from doing so. A considerable amount of business in connection with the North Island Trunk Railway, roads, surveys, and other matters was, however, done with Wahanui and Mr. John Ormsby (half-caste, and chairman of Kawhia Native Committee), those two practically representing the Ngatimaniapoto people.

It was also during the month of November that the Natives at Whatiwhatihoe started what they called a "King Committee" in opposition to the Kawhia Native Committee, which consists of members most of whom have nothing in common with the King party, and who were duly elected in accordance with "The Native Committees Act, 1883," the King Committee being a Committee nominated (not elected) by and from amongst the supporters of the King party. Of course they had no other standing than that which the mana or power of Tawhiao—now but a shadow of what it once was—could give them. That, however, did not cause them to have any the less idea of their own importance, and they did not hesitate at issuing summonses to Natives to appear before them who belonged to "the other side," and who would have nothing to do with them because they were not elected from amongst the people, and were not working in accordance with law. In one case they went so far as to arrest and forcibly bring before them a half-caste of Ngatimaniapoto, living at Kopua, who refused to acknowledge their jurisdiction. They only acted in that way once, however, and refrained from doing so any more, as they were given to understand that Ngatimaniapoto would look upon any further action of that sort on their part as a menace against the whole tribe, and would treat it accordingly. This policy of the King party in setting up Committees was not only carried out at Whatiwhatihoe, but also at Kawhia, Aotea, Thames, Ohinemuri, Piako, and other places where Tawhiao had any supporters; and they have caused in some cases considerable trouble, especially at Aotea—where for a time they stopped the repairing of the road across the harbour—and also at Ohinemuri, where the Ngatihako Tribe only a few weeks ago stopped the survey of the Paeroa-Te Aroha Railway line.

Fortunately, whilst the supporters of the King party were plotting and acting to embarrass the Government in every possible way, the Ngatimaniapoto and Ngatihikairo (of Kawhia) were doing all they could to assist and strengthen the Government's hands. At a meeting of the Kawhia Native Committee, held in October and continued in December, a number of matters were dealt with that tended towards the opening-up of the King country for settlement. A scale of prices was fixed for different classes of timber, a considerable quantity of which was then and is now being used by railway and other contractors. Arrangements were also made for granting by the Committee of temporary occupation-leases to contractors and storekeepers who wished to live in their district. These and other matters were settled by the Committee at that time; but the most important of all the subjects dealt with and disposed of by them was the agreeing to throw open the whole of the King country for gold-prospecting under certain conditions. As soon as I was made aware that the Committee had taken this step, I at once communicated with Government and with the chairman of the Committee (Mr. Ormsby, to whose intelligence, patience, and perseverance the credit of bringing about the desired end is due), with the idea of losing no time in taking advantage of what was likely to be, if well and quickly worked out, an important matter, not only for this district, but—should a payable goldfield have been discovered—for the colony at large. Having received instructions from you to carry out the matter at my own discretion, I at once commenced negotiations with the Committee, who expressed a wish that, before the country should be overrun with any one and every one who chose to rush there under the name of prospectors, I should find them twelve men who were *bonâ fide* and qualified prospectors, and who were sober and respectable withal, for the purpose of testing the country for gold and other minerals. This I engaged to do, and, in order to get the proper persons so that the country might be fairly tested, I thought it best to ask the Warden of Thames Goldfield (Mr. Kenrick) to nominate the number of suitable men required, as I felt sure he would know of such people amongst the large mining community at the Thames. This he did, and he also came here and assisted me, with his extensive knowledge of goldfield laws and regulations, to explain the matter in all its bearings to the Native Committee, and to put things in train for the speedy opening of the district as a goldfield, should it be found necessary to do so. The country

was subdivided by the Committee and ourselves into six districts, extending from Otorohanga on the north to Taumarunui (on the bank of the Wanganui River) on the south, the ocean on the west, and the Rangitoto, Maraeroa, and Tuhua Ranges on the east. The Europeans were divided into parties of two for each district, and with each two Europeans went two Native guides or companions, and on the 16th January last they started for their respective districts. I regret, however, to have to say that all efforts so far to find payable gold have proved unsuccessful. Some of the parties, after working two or three months without success, have given it up and returned to their homes. There are, however, still two men who are persevering with the hope that their efforts may yet be successful. The reports of some of those who have returned are of a very disheartening nature, especially that of Mr. O'Sullivan and companions of No. 4 party, who prospected the Tuhua country. They speak of it as composed principally of "pumice, marl, and limestone," and that they did not see either "quartz reefs, leaders, or stringers, or any prospect of gold." Some of the other parties were a little more successful, as in one or two cases they did get the "colour" here and there, but nothing to warrant their remaining in the district. There are, however, a party of Wanganui prospectors who have been prospecting in the Tuhua district for some months, and they say that the prospects they have met with are such as to warrant their continuing the search.

The next matter of importance that occurred in this district was the obstruction to a portion of the Kawhia-Aotea road by some of the King Natives who reside near the Aotea Harbour. The locality where the obstruction took place is a very boggy place in the Aotea Harbour, near to where the road crosses Te Maari Creek. It had been fascined and repaired some months previously; but had got into a bad state again. The first time it was repaired the Natives did not make any objection, as at that time a considerable force of the Armed Constabulary was stationed at Kawhia (about five miles off), and the King Natives in the locality thought it good policy to be on their best behaviour with regard to obstructing Government works. Since then, however, the garrison at Kawhia has been reduced from a hundred to about twenty men, and the moral support of the latter is therefore reduced to a minimum. The King party since then have also instituted the system of Committees, of which Aotea at that time boasted one; and the policy that these Committees seem to have been instructed to carry out in every district in which I have come across them has been to stop, if possible, all Government works that are being carried out on Native land that has not yet passed the Native Land Court; and whenever they think they can safely do so without running the risk of being punished for their action they do it, they looking upon it as a duty they owe to Tawhiao and the *tikanga* or King movement to stop everything that is being done on Native land unless it has first been sanctioned by Tawhiao himself. They have been told to do this in order to show the Europeans here and in England that they acknowledge Tawhiao as King, or head of the Maori race. But I have remarked that their zeal in carrying out that annoying kind of policy is in proportion to the power that there is in the locality to punish them or keep them down. If the force of police or Armed Constabulary in the district is such as to lead the Natives to think that action of that sort will not be allowed, but will be nipped in the bud, and possibly the perpetrators punished, they do not attempt it. If, on the other hand, they think they can carry on for a time, at least, with impunity, they take advantage of the situation, and attempt to show themselves a power by obstructing public works with a zeal and alacrity which it is a pity is not diverted into some more praiseworthy direction. The obstructors at Aotea stopped the contractor, drove him off, and took possession of his tools, which they took into Kawhia and handed over to the commanding officer, with instructions that he (the contractor) was not to return. I went to see them; with the result, after a great deal of talk and a desire on their part to postpone the settlement of the question until they could see Tawhiao, who was then at the Thames, that they modified their attitude into promising to do the work themselves if allowed to please themselves when they did it. This I could not agree to, as the road was used a good deal by Europeans and others who travel between Kawhia, Raglan, and Hamilton, and it was necessary that it should be repaired at once. I, however, told them that they would be allowed to do what was wanted if they set about it without delay, and did the work to the satisfaction of the Road Inspector. If, however, they did not go at the work without any delay, then Europeans would be sent to do it, and steps would be taken to punish any one who obstructed them. They would not openly agree to this, but asked to be let alone and they would do the work at their own time. After the meeting they evidently discussed the matter amongst themselves, for within a day or two from the day of the meeting they were busy cutting tea-tree for fascines, and taking it in canoes to where it was required; and that part of the road has since been completed by them.

Another case of road-obstruction occurred subsequently at Whatiwhatihoe, but was not of a very serious nature. In fact, in this case the Natives had both law and justice on their side, as, through some mistake, the contractor for putting culverts in the road near to Whatiwhatihoe settlement was preparing to put in a culvert within the boundary-fences of some Native cultivations, which he is prohibited by law from doing.

Shortly after this an incident occurred at a settlement called Pitoritori, near Kihikihi, which, although it was not a matter in which Europeans were concerned, caused some excitement amongst the Natives at the time of its occurrence. It was a case of incendiarism of a very pronounced type, but was devoid of that villanous and miscreant nature that usually accompanies acts of that

sort when committed by Europeans. The case under notice was a genuine Maori way of asserting ownership to land. Two Natives, named respectively Tukorehu and Heperea, had lived on good terms together for a number of years at the same settlement, neither apparently being desirous during that time of disputing the ownership by his companion of the land occupied jointly by them; neither does there appear to have been any one to interest himself in disturbing the harmony of feeling that existed between the two until a few months ago, when a half-caste named John Gage (whose father and mother lived many years ago upon the land in question) appeared upon the scene, and he in some way or other seems to have estranged the two Natives, Tukorehu and Heperea, who had so long lived amicably together; the result of which estrangement was that, during a quarrel which took place on the Kikihiki Racecourse, and which commenced between Gage and Tukorehu, and in which Heperea afterwards joined, some very strong language was used. Tukorehu, who is a man of violent temper, threatened to burn down the houses of his opponent Heperea, which were standing on the land. But, the mere threat not producing the desired effect, he proceeded at once to carry it out by riding across the Puniu River close by and setting fire to the houses, which were on the opposite bank. One was a small two-roomed wooden house, and the other a Maori whare, and they were both burnt down, with what property was in them. This being purely a Maori quarrel, and one in which the title to land was concerned, it was not considered a matter in which the police need interfere. I went to see Tukorehu, and remonstrated with him regarding his action. He expressed regret for having acted so hastily, but blamed Gage for what had taken place. He subsequently paid Heperea for the loss of his houses and their contents, and they are now good friends again. I took advantage of the opportunity to try and get Tukorehu to have the title to the disputed land settled by the Native Land Court or the Kawhia Native Committee. He would not agree to the former tribunal, but was not averse to the matter being taken in hand by the latter, provided that Tawhiao (whose supporter he is) and the King Committee would agree to his doing so. He has since put an adjacent block before the Kawhia Native Committee for the investigation of title.

Census.—During the month of January I was appointed chief enumerator for the purpose of taking the Maori census within the Counties of Eden, Manukau, Raglan, Kawhia, Waikato, Waipa, Piako, Ohinemuri, Thames, and Coromandel, including Great and Little Barrier and the adjacent islands. As I furnished a report upon this matter when I sent in my returns, I need not now refer to it more than to say that I am of opinion that the Native population within the counties above mentioned has decreased considerably since the census was taken in 1881, especially in the district known as the "King country." As the census in 1881 was not taken in accordance with county boundaries, but was divided into Native districts, it is not very easy to make a comparison between the returns of then and now in particular districts. The difference will, however, be seen from the totals.

Tawhiao's annual meeting was held as usual at Whatiwhatihoe during the month of March, but, compared with the meetings of former years, was a very poor one indeed, very few Natives attending from out-districts. The ordinary speechmaking took place; but, notwithstanding the usual perversion of facts, rash statements, and straining of the imagination on the part of the few leading supporters of the King movement who spoke at the meeting, it was patent to all that the movement itself is about on its last legs. The separation of the Ngatimaniapoto and Ngatihikairo Tribes from the King party some four years ago, their subsequent friendly attitude towards Government in allowing public works in the shape of roads, railways, and surveys to be carried out over their lands, all of which the King party have found themselves helpless to oppose, has proved to them that not only has their glory, but so has their power departed. The putting of the Taupo lauds through the Court has also been a severe blow to them, because so long as the Native title to the land was not extinguished Tawhiao and his people looked upon and spoke of it as territory under their mana and jurisdiction. But the investigation of title by the Native Land Court removes that pillar from the now-tumbling edifice of the King movement; for it is a well-known fact that of all the Natives who have declared themselves willing to give over their land to Tawhiao and the King party *before* it had passed the Native Land Court, not one has yet been found who, *after* he has put his land through the Court, and can then legally give it to Tawhiao, has done so. There is an amount of inconsistency about action of this sort that ought to have long ago opened the eyes of Tawhiao and Major Te Wheoro to the fact that the documents they took so much trouble to get signed by Natives who professed to give up their land to Tawhiao were not worth the paper they were written upon, and were never considered binding by the Natives who signed them. Another blow is about to be dealt to the King movement which will perhaps be the severest that it has ever received since its defeat at arms by British troops twenty-three years ago. I allude to the application that has lately been sent to the Native Land Court by the representatives of the four tribes—viz., Ngatimaniapoto, Ngatiraukawa, Whanganui, and Ngatihikairo—who claim to own the balance of the King country that has not yet passed the Court. Should the title to this large area of land be settled by the Court, I think that the King movement, looked at in the light of a menace or obstruction to the Government, will be at an end.

It was also during the month of March that the survey was commenced of a block of land at Aotea called Manuaitu, which some of the friendly Natives in that locality wished to put through the Native Land Court, but which proceeding, as also the survey, was strenuously opposed by the King party. A considerable period elapsed between the application for and

the commencement of the survey, and during that time a great deal of what is known as "tall" talk was indulged in by certain of the King Natives. Aotea has long been looked upon as one of the hotbeds of Kingism; and for any of the friendly Natives to even suggest such a thing as a survey of land in that locality, notwithstanding the probability that the land proposed to be surveyed was owned by them, was looked upon by the King party as a piece of presumption on their part, and the action of Government in proposing to grant such a survey was looked upon as a policy that should be opposed by every possible means that the King party could command. Letters were written, threats made, and speeches delivered *ad libitum*, denouncing the survey and the promoters of it. The surveyor was to be stopped and turned off; and so excited and taken up were the minds of the King party at Aotea regarding this survey that they forebore to take any steps to oppose the erection of the telegraph-poles across Aotea Harbour, which was then being done for the purpose of connecting Kawhia with other parts of the colony by telegraph, and which work was judiciously commenced before the survey of the Manuaitu Block. The Natives decided not to interfere with it, but to reserve their energies for the obstruction of the survey when it should take place. As, however, considerable delay took place before the survey commenced, there was plenty of time for the Natives to look at the matter in all its bearings; and they appear to have done so. Some of the most obstructive got tired of waiting, and their zeal languished through want of opportunity to exercise it; others began to doubt whether it was advisable to obstruct at all, but rather to let matters take their course; whilst some went over to the other side, and professed themselves in favour of a survey and investigation of title. I wrote several letters to different chiefs explaining the position to them, and advising them to reserve their energies for a fight of words in the Native Land Court. This, with the assistance of the causes above mentioned, resulted in the survey being tacitly agreed to, and when the surveyor went on to the ground to commence his work no one appeared to obstruct him, and he has been able to carry on his work to completion without being interfered with. The title to this land is likely to be investigated by the Court that will sit at Kihikihi in June next.

During the month of April the Native Minister visited this district, and had meetings with both the Ngatimaniapoto and Waikato Tribes, or, in other words, with those who are on good terms with and assist the Government, and those who oppose. The meeting with the former was held at Kopua, both Wahanui and Taonui being present. The principal speaker was Mr. John Ormsby, half-caste, and chairman of Kawhia Native Committee, to whom the tribe had intrusted the task of putting their views before the Minister. The meeting was a very satisfactory one. The Natives evinced a willingness to work under our laws, and to assist the Government in every way, even to putting the land known as the "King country" through the Court, by which means only can settlement be promoted; they, on their side, only making certain reasonable requests in connection with matters which they consider will conduce to their welfare and protection under the new order of events which is now taking place, the principal of which requests were the alteration of "The Native Committees Act, 1883," to make it more workable and more acceptable to them, and the appointment by Government of an officer to act in conjunction with one of the Natives, appointed by themselves, to assess the value of the land in excess of one chain width which has been taken for the North Island Trunk Railway line and for station-sites.

The meeting with the Waikato or King Natives was held at Whatiwhatihoe. Tawhiao was present, and was most affable and friendly; in fact, he always has been so at his meetings with Ministers, but this time there was something about his demeanour and that of his people that showed that he and they were more anxious as to the result of this meeting than they had been as to the result of any previous one. In fact, at this meeting they showed for the first time, through their speakers (Tawhiao and Major Te Wheoro), a desire to come to some arrangement with the Government. At previous meetings their demeanour has always been that of a people who, if they could not get what they wanted, were quite indifferent and perfectly satisfied with the existing state of affairs; and they only seemed to meet a Minister out of respect for his position, and for the purpose of hearing what he had to say and what proposals he had to make to them, never intending to accept any until the ones they wanted and were waiting for had been made to them. The march of events during the last four years has, however, greatly altered the position of affairs. Whilst they during that period have been gradually losing power, prestige, and support, the Government, on the other hand—thanks to the friendly attitude taken up by some of the tribes who formerly were the mainstays of the King party—have been able to take up a position entirely independent of them, and (with here and there a small exception) to carry on public works throughout the district without having, as was the case some years ago, to first consider whether it would be possible to carry out such works if they were likely to be opposed by Tawhiao and his advisers. The result of the meeting at Whatiwhatihoe was that a subsequent meeting between the Hon. Mr. Ballance and Tawhiao (who was accompanied by Major Te Wheoro) took place next day at Alexandra, when certain proposals were made by Mr. Ballance which seemed to be looked upon favourably by Tawhiao; and that meeting was the first at which Tawhiao has ever gone so far as to discuss with a Minister the settlement of the questions at issue between himself and the Government. It was plain all through the interview that Tawhiao had only the interest of his people at heart. There was an entire absence of the element of selfishness in all his conversation. He did not even allude to any personal benefit that he might obtain should he, on behalf

of his people, come to any arrangement with the Government, but seemed only to desire that they should be placed in a proper position by any change that might take place. From the conversation that he and Major Te Wheoro had with Mr. Ballance, it is clear that the King party have very much modified their views and demands during the last few months. There have been numerous reasons for this, some of which have been already referred to by me; but one of the reasons that has helped to bring about this feeling is the utter barrenness (from a political point of view) as to result of the journey of Tawhiao and the delegates to England. Until they received the despatch from Lord Derby informing them that whatever they wanted they must go to the Parliament of the colony to obtain, they fondly cherished the hope that they would be allowed to govern themselves by the aid of a sort of miniature home rule, which was to have been granted them by the English Government, and which would be independent of the New Zealand Parliament. That idea has now been dispelled, and they have come face to face with the fact that their only chance of doing any good for themselves and to prevent their political ruin is to be on friendly terms with, instead of antagonistic to, the Government. Tawhiao has now modified his proposals to such an extent that all or nearly all he asks for is to be allowed to have a say, in conjunction with the Government, in what is proposed to be done in the locality of Kawhia and Aotea, and that the House shall pass an Act this session empowering a Council of Native Chiefs to be elected (or nominated) to arrange matters for the Native race, the result of their deliberations to be laid before the House of Parliament for its approval. In fact, looking at the House in the light of a committee, this proposed Maori Council of Chiefs would be a sort of sub-committee detailed expressly for the purpose of dealing with matters concerning the Native race, and it would bring up its report to the committee, or, rather, to the House, in the manner of other sub-committees. Both Tawhiao and Major Te Wheoro place great importance upon this proposed Council of Chiefs, and at present it seems to be the only position they are prepared to accept in lieu of that so long held by Tawhiao and his people. I think I am right in saying that if a Bill of that sort should be introduced in the House this session, and had any chance of success, Tawhiao would not hesitate about going to Wellington at once, or even taking a seat in the Upper House, for the purpose of assisting to bring about that result that he so much desires. Unless he can gain an end of this sort, he is chary of compromising himself by going to Wellington. He has, however, despatched a representative in the person of Henare Kaihau, an intelligent and thoroughly-Europeanized young chief of Waiuku, upon whose report will depend whether Tawhiao goes himself to Wellington or not.

Native Schools.—I am glad to be able to report that I hope before six months from now has elapsed there will be three schools for Native children within my district, as tenders have already been called for by the Education Department for building them. One is to be at Kopua, near Alexandra, one at Waotu, near Cambridge, and one at Tapapa, near Oxford. It is a matter for congratulation that the Natives have at last seen and acknowledged the importance of education for their children; and I hope that the example set by the Natives of the three settlements above mentioned will speedily be followed by those in other parts of my district where the juvenile Native population is numerous enough to warrant the establishment of schools. To Mr. Arthur Ormsby, of Kopua, is due the credit of bringing about and working up the desire amongst the people for a Native school at Kopua. The Ngatiraukawa chief Arekatera te Wera (of Waotu) has given great assistance in connection with the school that is about to be erected at Waotu; and to Karanama te Whakaheke and others is due the credit for the school at Tapapa.

Public Works.—The public works that have been carried on in this district during the past year, and in which the Natives have taken part, have been the formation of the first section of the North Island Trunk Railway (fifteen miles), from Te Awamutu to Otorohanga, and the continuation of the formation of the road from Alexandra to Kawhia. The Natives have proved themselves first-class workmen at earthworks when properly supervised, and, with the exception of the King party, who would not take part in public works on principle, they have gladly availed themselves of the opportunity of earning wages at road- and railway-work.

Waikato Confiscated Lands.—Very little has been done during the past year in connection with the settling of ex-rebels on any of the balance of the available confiscated lands. There are several reasons for this, and I have referred to them in previous reports. One of the principal reasons is the extremely poor quality (with here and there an exception) of the land available for occupation; but the main reason of all has been, and is yet, that the King party—amongst whom are most of the ex-rebels who it is desired should occupy these confiscated lands—have not yet arrived at the stage in which they consider it is incumbent upon them to, as they think, humour the Government by breaking up their present political home at Whatiwhatiho, and splitting themselves up into small bodies for the purpose of taking up isolated positions on land which it is doubtful whether they could get a subsistence from. Since the investigation of the title to the large Maungatautari Block I have doubted very much whether it is necessary for Government to provide any of the at-present-landless ex-rebels with Crown lands to live upon. I find, on referring to the Native Land Court lists of owners of the different subdivisions of Maungatautari, that a number of Natives whom I had looked upon as landless either proved their ownership to certain portions of the block, or else were put in out of compliment by the real owners. Be that as it may, the fact remains that they, with others, were awarded land, and in all probability it was land of as good if not superior quality to that which

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-

station at Parawai. I have not seen it myself, but have heard from those who have, and who are qualified judges, that it is well and truly built, and would not disgrace either a European architect to design or a European carpenter to build. It has been built entirely by the Maoris, even the plans and specifications being drawn by them. The making of the plans and the labour of building have been under the superintendence of Hori Matene, a young Native of Te Kirikiri, and Hoani Nahe, of Omahu, near Te Puriri (formerly member for the Western Maori Electoral District), and from all accounts the work is very creditable to them.

During the month of December the old chief Tukukino, of Komata, obstructed the survey of the Hikutaia-Paeroa Railway at a place where it crossed his land and went through his cultivations. The work was stopped for a time. I went to see him about it, and, after a long talk, got him to remove his objection and obstruction, the conditions being that there is to be a small flag-station at Komata for the benefit of himself and the people of his settlement when they want to use the railway for the purposes of travelling or sending their produce either to Paeroa or the Thames. They also asked to have the work of formation of the portion at or near to Komata given to them when the time for making the line arrives. I reported fully to you upon this matter when I returned from seeing Tukukino.

The Ngatihako Tribe have since also stopped the same railway-survey where it crosses their land called Te Rae-o-te-Papa (about three miles south of Paeroa). These people, as you are aware, have always been obstructive to public works and surveys. I had a meeting with them at their settlement on the Waihou River, and it was plain from what was said that they were only carrying out their old policy of trying to see if they could block the work. But they are only prepared to obstruct up to a certain point, and that point is reached whenever the Government makes up its mind and takes steps to punish them for their obstruction. So soon as they see themselves in danger of getting into trouble, then they will withdraw their opposition, and console themselves with the fact that they did all they could to stop the work short of coming to blows or putting themselves in the position to be punished by the law. I may state that in their case (unlike that of Tukukino) the land claimed by them, over which it is proposed to survey the line, is waste land covered with fern and tea-tree, is not fenced in, and is only used as an open run for cattle, pigs, and horses. There are no houses upon it. I also reported fully upon this matter to you when I returned from visiting the Ngatihako.

The deaths during the past year of Natives of importance in the Hauraki District have been those of Mokena Hori and Te Karauna Hori, of Te Aroha, and Rapata te Arakai, of Ohinemuri. The former belonged to the Ngatirahiri Tribe, and was principally known to Europeans through the great interest he took, and the assistance he rendered to Government, in connection with the opening of Te Aroha Goldfield. Te Karauna Hori was by birth and standing the principal man of the Ngatirahiri Tribe; but his love for intoxicating drink, to which he eventually fell a victim, caused him to be looked up to with less respect than he otherwise would have been, and consequently other and younger men, of perhaps less rank, but with more intelligence and better morals, had taken his place for some years before he died. Rapata te Arakai was the principal chief of Te Uriwha hapu of the Ngatitamatera Tribe. He had been a Government pensioner for a number of years, and was in receipt of a pension of £50 a year at the time of his death. It was mainly through his assistance that the Ohinemuri lands were thrown open for gold-mining in 1875. He had been ailing for some time, but his death was shockingly sudden and unexpected. He was at the Thames, attending a sitting of the Native Land Court, and was about to return to Ohinemuri for the purpose of taking back the body of a woman of his tribe who had died at the Thames during the sitting of the Court. The deceased woman's body had been conveyed on board the steamer that was to take it from Shortland to Ohinemuri, and Rapata was in the act of walking across the street to where the steamer was lying at the wharf, when he fell down apparently dead. He was carried on board the steamer, and every attention paid to him, but it was found that life was extinct.

The only public work of importance that has been carried out in the Thames District during the past year has been the formation of the railway from Kopu to Hikutaia; but I am not aware that the Natives have taken much part in the work—they prefer the more independent life of gum-digging, at which some of them earn very good wages.

I have, &c.,

G. T. WILKINSON,

Government Native Agent, Waikato, Thames, and Auckland.

The Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

No. 6.

Mr. H. W. BRABANT, R.M., Tauranga, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Tauranga, Bay of Plenty, 4th May, 1886.

In reply to your circular asking me to report on the state of the Natives in my district, I have the honour to do so as follows:—

1. Tauranga District.

During the past year there has been but little sickness or mortality amongst the Natives of this district, and they have, as usual, been supplied with medical attendance and drugs when

applied for. The census just taken of the Ngaiterangi Tribe shows a slight decrease when compared with that of 1881; but when compared with the return of 1873 it will appear that the rapid falling-off has been arrested. It is not so evident to what this is to be attributed, as the social condition of the Natives is but little improved, except in the matter of sobriety. This last, however, must have its effect, and probably the schools which have been established are beginning to have some influence. In this district there are three schools in operation—at Maungatapu, at Huria, and at Paeroa. They have been fairly attended. The Natives are certainly taking a greater interest in them than they formerly did, and, I think, beginning to understand what has been so often told them, but so seldom believed, that educating the children is the one means by which the race can be saved from extinction. An application has been made to Government for another school, and there is some prospect of its being established. The great obstacle to the progress of the schools here is the annual exodus which takes place in autumn to the gum-fields in the Thames District.

I regret to report that the crops grown by Natives in this district have been almost a failure, owing to the drought setting in early in the season. They have for some years past ceased to grow produce for sale, but this year they will not have nearly enough for their own support. The result will be, I am told, that they will have to depend more on gum-digging; and some will probably wish to sell land to enable them to tide over the winter season.

The Maori King party have during the past year continued their efforts to keep up and increase their influence in the district, and to induce the Natives here to postpone the settling of titles and selling of land till Tawhiao's negotiations with the Home Government are finally concluded. The Natives seem, however, to be losing the confidence they professed last year in Tawhiao's scheme; and if, as seems likely, that chief should come to terms with the Government, it must, of course, collapse. Te Kooti visited Tauranga a few months since, in the course of the "progress" he and his followers were making through the country; but he met with a cool reception here. The Ngatimateika hapu had asked him to visit their settlement, and invited the other hapus to meet him; but the latter declined, with the result that Te Kooti went on to Waikato after only a few hours' stay. The Ngaiterangi Tribe lately petitioned the Native Minister to allow Tauranga to be constituted a separate district under the Native Committees Act. This was acceded to, and the new Committee has just been elected. The manner in which the tribe managed the election is, perhaps, worth recording. The Act provides merely that the Returning Officer shall give notice of a day on which the Native residents in the district shall elect a Committee not exceeding twelve persons. The Ngaiterangi, a fortnight before the day so appointed, held a meeting of the whole tribe, and apportioned the twelve seats amongst the various hapus in proportion to the population. Each of the hapu or hapus to whom a seat was apportioned elected their own member, and the tribe then appointed delegates to nominate the whole twelve before the Returning Officer on the day appointed. The twelve were elected without opposition, and the whole proceeding appears to have given great satisfaction. The plan of having each hapu represented certainly appears a good one, and the Natives consider that they have improved upon the mode of election as provided by Parliament.

During the past year in this district no Native has been charged with any serious crime, a few cases of drunkenness within the borough being the only charges made against Natives in the Police Court; and the Ngaiterangi have fully sustained their character as an orderly, law-abiding tribe.

2. *The Maketu-Rotorua District.*

In this district nothing of moment as regards the general health and social condition of the Natives has come under my notice. The census shows the population to be about stationary, neither increasing nor decreasing. The crops in Maketu have been, as in Tauranga, to a great extent a failure; those about Rotorua, however, have been somewhat better, plantations near the bush having, I am told, given good returns.

In the Maketu District some of the Natives talk of visiting the gum-fields in consequence, but about Rotorua the Natives have rents and other sources of income, and depend less on agricultural pursuits. As has been the rule of late years, Mr. Bush has taken the magisterial work at Maketu, and I at Rotorua. At the latter place the Natives have, as usual, given the Court a considerable amount of business, both on the criminal and civil side. Two charges of larceny and seven of drunkenness were heard against Natives; but no serious charge has been made against them, and as a people they can be stated to be well behaved and orderly.

The civil cases which the Court has had to decide have been principally disputes between Natives as to the ownership of animals and as to the division of moneys, the "spoils" of the tourist traffic. It is probable that in the future a number of these disputes will be referred to the Native Committee for settlement.

In the Maketu-Rotorua District the Land Courts and the management of their lands continue to interest the Natives more than any other topic, and here there does not appear to be any league to oppose the Government land-purchase operations.

Six Native schools continue in operation, with generally a good and, in some cases, an increasing attendance. New schools are shortly to be erected at Ranguiru, about ten miles from Maketu, and at Te Ngae, about seven miles from Ohinemutu. Others are talked of, and throughout the district the Natives are taking more interest in the question of education.

It seems unnecessary for me to report on any matter connected with the Thermal Springs District, as the Government have now a special officer in charge at Rotorua.

3. *Confiscated Lands.*

During the past year I have finished settling the titles to the lands returned to Natives in the Tauranga District; but as I am preparing a special report on this subject it is unnecessary to enlarge on it here. I have also subdivided the large Native reserve on the right bank of the Rangitaiki River, in the Whakatane District, and I have settled the titles to several other reserves in the same district.

The Crown titles now in course of issue to Natives for returned confiscated lands in the Bay of Plenty have from time to time been referred to me by the Crown Lands Department, and have received careful revision at my hands. The issue of these long-delayed titles is giving great satisfaction to the Natives concerned.

I have, &c.,

HERBERT W. BRABANT,

Resident Magistrate, Native Officer, Bay of Plenty.

The Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

No. 7.

Mr. R. S. BUSH, R.M., Opotiki, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Resident Magistrate's Office, Opotiki, 3rd May, 1886.

In compliance with your circular letter I have the honour to furnish the usual annual report on the Natives in this district.

Condition of the Natives.

It affords me much pleasure to report some slight improvement in the condition of some of the tribes resident in this district, notably the Ngaitai, of Torere, and that section of the Whakatohea under Te Hira te Popo. It is to be hoped that at no distant date a like improvement may be noticeable in other sections and tribes.

There is a marked decrease in the consumption of intoxicating liquors. At settlements where a great deal of spirits were given to visitors on occasions of tangis and suchlike, none is now distributed amongst those tribes residing in the eastern portion of this district. The Whanau-a-Apanui, at Maraenui and Omaio, are the only people who are not advocating temperance principles.

The Torere, Te Kaha, and Raukokore Natives, however, are becoming strong advocates of those principles, and I trust their good example may ere long be followed by the Whanau-a-Apanui Tribe. When at Raukokore in the early part of last month, adjusting matters with respect to a site for a school, the Natives there particularly requested that no one should be appointed to their school as teacher unless he was a total abstainer.

Out of a population of 3,951 Natives only seven have been convicted of drunkenness since the last annual report. This fact is the best proof of the improvement in this direction. The Whakatane Natives have much improved in their habits with respect to drink, but I think a considerable quantity of liquor is still consumed by them at their *uhungas*.

The Urewera, the most uncivilized of the tribes residing in this district, when visiting our settlements, do not even indulge so freely as they did a few years ago.

Until some plan can be devised to individualize the Native lands, so as each Native or family can hold his or their land separately, without the interference of the hapu or tribe, I much fear no very great improvement will be perceptible in their condition.

Besides the cases of drunkenness, twelve Natives have been charged in the Police Court with the following offences: two with assault—one convicted, and one dismissed; five with using abusive and threatening language—three convicted, and two dismissed; two with furious riding—both convicted; two with exposure of person—both convicted; and one, an Urewera, with larceny, for which he received seven days' imprisonment with hard labour. In the Resident Magistrate's Court here only twelve cases have been heard in which Natives were concerned—viz., six in which Natives only were parties, and six in which Natives were defendants.

No epidemic of any kind has visited the Natives during the past year. They have enjoyed average good health. No chiefs of more than ordinary importance have died except Mihaere Tamatamarangi, of the Whanau-o-te-Ihitu, the principal chief at Te Kaha. Two violent deaths, however, have taken place—viz., that of an old Native named Tumene, accidentally drowned, and that of a Native girl named Hutita, who hanged herself in the vicinity of Te Kaha. With respect to the death of Mihaere, who came here for medical attendance while suffering from a severe attack of pleurisy, I would state that this chief made rapid progress towards recovery, and there was no reason why he should have died if he had only acted up to the doctor's instructions, one of which was that he must not return home from here for at least a fortnight later than the time he actually stopped. The doctor cautioned him, when he persisted in going, of the risk and danger he ran, whereas on the other hand if he remained as suggested he could travel home without much or any risk. He would listen to neither the doctor nor myself, but started for

Te Kaha, upon reaching which he was compelled to take to his bed, when inflammation of the bowels came on, and he died. I need scarcely say that upon leaving here he abandoned all idea of the doctor's advice, and called in one of their own *tohungas*, and it was only when too late that the doctor was again sought after. This is a case where the patient really killed himself, because he would not be guided by the doctor's advice. It appears to me that little or nothing can be done for Natives in this way unless they can be placed in a hospital and thus be compelled to obey the doctor; otherwise it is labour in vain.

Disposition of the Natives.

The conduct of the Natives throughout the past year has been peaceful and friendly, and I do not think they have any desire for a different state of affairs. Even amongst themselves they have been most peaceable: it is the first year since I came here that I have not been called upon to interfere to keep some, or other of the tribes from quarrelling over some of their disputed lands.

The Hon. the Native Minister, having visited this district, will be in a position to form a very correct opinion as to their political condition; and I feel sure that that visit will prove most beneficial to this part of the country, as the Natives here in the past, have looked upon themselves as being neglected—in fact, slighted—on account of not receiving a Ministerial visit since the days of the late Sir D. McLean. The Natives argue that the Native Minister is expressly appointed on their account; he ought therefore to make himself personally known to them all, and he can only do this by visiting them at their settlements, and there discussing matters of interest to them and the Government, and affecting their welfare. Of one thing I am quite sure—the late visit will assist greatly in allaying the Maori mind, which has been much disturbed for some years for want of an opportunity to unburden itself to some one in authority. In my humble opinion, the next best thing to a Maori receiving all he asks for is to be afforded an opportunity of giving vent to his pent-up feelings, which in most instances are grievances of some kind or another, over which he has been brooding more or less for some time. Having received this opportunity, he is a new man for a time, but must again at no distant period be afforded a similar opportunity, and so on from time to time. The late interview between the Hon. the Native Minister and the Natives in this district will, I feel sure, be productive of the best results. The receptions tendered to the Hon. the Native Minister, both here and at Whakatane, were not only the most enthusiastic, but the sentiments expressed throughout were most respectful, friendly, and loyal.

The Urewera volunteered their services in the event of foreign invasion.

The Te Kooti form of Church Service is a *bête noir* to the more intelligent and law-abiding sections of the Natives, who look upon this form of religion, though many of them were at one time adherents of it, as antagonistic to the Queen's authority, and express a fear that sooner or later it may be the cause of trouble between the different sects of Natives, which might end in involving them with us. Just now the Natives at Te Kaha, Raukokore, and Torere look upon the increase of Te-Kootism with grave suspicion, and are using their best endeavours to confine it to such localities where it is no new thing, or the population of which show no inclination to abandon it. They have gone so far as to order one or two persons resident at Te Kaha and Raukokore to remove to one or other of the Whanau-a-Apanui kaingas, and objected to their introducing their religion or meetings into those places. I believe it has been agreed to comply with this request.

I may say for years past no member of Wi Kingi's tribe at Torere has been an adherent of this form of religion. These people, with those at Te Kaha and Raukokore, have been the main cause of a resident Native clergyman being located at the Kaha: necessarily they are ardent supporters of his. These Natives have repeatedly urged upon me the advisability of Government intervention to suppress Te-Kootism, on the ground that trouble might arise in the event of the different sects clashing in the future. I have pointed out to them that the Government does not consider it a part of its duty to interfere with the religion of any subject, and that it is the privilege of every subject to adopt and adhere to any creed or form of religion he may fancy, and that the Government would not interfere with any of them unless a breach of the law was committed. Wiremu Kingi also received a letter from the Native Office to similar effect, in reply to one he wrote on the subject. There is one peculiarity in the Te Kooti faith which has lately come under my notice, and that is the rebaptizing of those persons who are members of that creed—not only persons who newly join, but also those who maintained that form since the days of the rebellion. I made this discovery while preparing the Native census. I found, upon comparing the names of individuals with my list of 1881, that only a very few were known by the names they at that time bore. The most noticeable instance of this is amongst the Urewera. I do not know how this is to be explained, unless it is connected with the fact of Te Kooti being pardoned, whereby a new era was commenced, and it therefore became necessary to rebaptize his followers, perhaps because under their former names they were mixed up with and known to be participators in acts of bloodshed, but now, as they had been pardoned, it was necessary, as it were, to be rechristened, and commence a new and different life. I sincerely hope, for their sakes, that this act may bear such an interpretation.

The Urewera have expressed a wish to have their district made a separate Committee district. The Ngatiawa, Ngatipukeko, the Tawera, and other sections of Natives are also anxious

to have a new Committee district formed, to extend to the western side of Ohiwa, and to begin at the Waitahanni River.

Crops.—The crops are very fair throughout the district; kumaras in particular are exceedingly good all along the coast. Potatoes also, judging from the quantities the Natives are selling, must be very abundant. The maize likewise is of good quality, and may now be looked upon as saved, although not all harvested.

Public Works.—The Torere Natives have during the past year been employed widening the coast-road between Opepe and their settlement, and the Whanau-a-Apanui have been engaged in making a horse-track over the hills from Hauai to Maraenui, which, when traversable, will prove a great boon to travellers, as it will avoid six or seven miles of heavy shingly-beach travelling, and obviate the risk and delay occasioned in rough weather at Maraenui Point. The Te Kaha and Raukokore Natives have likewise been employed in repairing the bridle-track between those places. The Natives appear anxious to be employed road-making, especially those resident at the eastern end of the district. It is a question whether road-making is beneficial to them or not. I fancy it has a tendency to reduce the extent of cultivations, which necessarily makes them run short of food in the following spring.

Schools.—There are nine Native schools in this district under my supervision. The last quarter's returns show that on the 31st March ultimo there was an average attendance of 247 boys and 175 girls, making a total of 422, being an increase of seventeen over the last year's attendance. It will be seen that the males far outnumber the females. If this, together with the result of the census, which shows the males to exceed the females by 126, is any criterion, then I am afraid, though the Maoris may have slightly increased in this district since 1881, yet these facts must show that they must decrease, when the females are not equal in number to the males. While speaking of schools, perhaps I may be excused if I allude to that useful little book, compiled by the Inspector of Native Schools, called "Health for the Maori." I have more than once, when conversing with Natives about diseases and the means of preventing the same, had my attention drawn by the speakers to this work, and been told that was what was told them by Mr. Pope in his book; thereby showing me that they are reading the work and evidently taking notice of its contents: but I fear our endeavours to improve their condition will be of little avail until we can find some means to make them renounce their old customs with respect to *tohungas*, *makutu*, and *poropitis* (*i.e.*, healers of the sick, belief in witchcraft, and prophetic persons of any other description). These, in my humble opinion, do more towards the destruction of the Native race than anything else I know of.

Maketu.—I have visited Maketu, as heretofore, periodically, and held the usual Courts there. The business of this Court has much increased since my last report, although the Natives have not been so litigious as heretofore—a circumstance which I attribute to the fact of their being more or less engaged in the Native Land Court, passing their lands through that Court. The conduct of the Natives, so far as it has come under my knowledge, has been remarkably good: no Native has been punished for any serious offence.

I have, &c.,

R. S. BUSH,

The Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

Resident Magistrate.

No. 8.

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

SIR,—

Rotorua, 30th April, 1886.

In compliance with your Circular No. 2, of the 24th ultimo, I have the honour to report upon the state of the Natives in the Rotorua District.

I am glad to be able to state that during the past twelve months the Natives of this district have been generally law-abiding. There have been a few serious disputes between contending hapus relative to the ownership of land not yet adjudicated upon by the Native Land Court; but they have been happily settled without recourse to bodily violence. Considerable excitement was caused in November last by the ejection of Mrs. Graham from the Terrace Hotel at Te Wairoa, and the subsequent assault upon Constable Abrams when he was attempting to arrest certain of the Natives concerned. There can be no doubt that the Natives believed that they were only exercising their legal right in resuming possession of the premises, having been so advised by Europeans, although they acted improperly in their manner of gaining their object. The assault upon the constable was brought about entirely by his own want of tact and judgment. Later in the day I went out to Te Wairoa; and the result was that the whole of the five Natives concerned in the ejection came in quietly, and submitted to the law. They were charged before two Justices of the Peace, and were then admitted to bail to appear before the Resident Magistrate on the usual Court-day. They duly appeared; but when the case was called on Mrs. Graham's solicitor stated that he did not propose to call any evidence, and the accused were discharged. The matter has since been settled by arbitration. More recently there was an attempt made, under legal advice, to re-enter a portion of the Lake House property at Ohinemutu, which resulted in the forcible ejection of two Native women by certain Europeans,

who were committed for trial; but the Grand Jury found "No true bill," and the case collapsed. It is believed to have been a phase of the *Robertson v. Graham* case, which has so often occupied the Supreme Court, and which is not yet settled. With the exception of the Wairoa affair, the charges brought against Natives during the past year have been of a minor character, and I have much pleasure in being able to report that, on the whole, drunkenness is steadily decreasing.

There has been a considerable amount of sickness amongst the Natives, but nothing of an epidemic character. Several Natives have died recently at Te Wairoa, and several are now ill; but they are suffering from a variety of disorders. I regret to have to record the recent death there of Renata Ngahana, a young chief of good character and great ability, who held an appointment as a Native Land Court Assessor, and who was under orders to resume duty at a northern Court at the time of his decease. His loss will be seriously felt by the Tuhourangi Tribe. Amongst other deaths may be noted that of Niramona Pini, a young man of high rank in the Ngatiwhakaue Tribe. I am still, however, of the opinion expressed last year, that the Natives in this district are not actually decreasing in number, and I believe that the census just taken will prove such to be the case.

Owing to the late drought the potato-crops have been a partial failure, and I fear that many of the Natives will be short of food during the coming winter and spring. It is hoped, however, that work will shortly be started on a section of the railway-line here, which will afford the young men an opportunity of earning the wherewithal to provide the necessaries of life.

The Natives continue to take great interest in the education of their children, and it is intended to establish a new school near Te Ngae as soon as a proper title to the site can be obtained through the Native Land Court. So far as the primary Native schools are concerned, I think the money spent is judiciously invested, but I am not so sanguine regarding the present system of higher education of Native children at Te Aute College and elsewhere. If the good work done at those places could be continued by subsequently teaching trades under a system of compulsory apprenticeship as a *sine qua non*, some permanent benefit might be hoped for. As it is, after leaving those institutions they return to their homes at a critical period, and the result in most cases is that "their last state is worse than their first." I believe that children committed to industrial schools can now be apprenticed out and kept under supervision until they are twenty-one years of age, when they are really old enough to take care of themselves, and that consequently there will be less danger of their reverting to their old habits than was formerly the case. I respectfully beg to suggest that something similar should be done for those Native children who may display natural ability in the primary schools.

I have, &c.,

H. DUNBAR JOHNSON,

The Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

Government Agent.

No. 9.

Major SCANNELL, R.M., Taupo, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Resident Magistrate's Office, Taupo, 21st April, 1886.

In compliance with instructions contained in your Circular No. 2, dated the 24th ultimo, I have the honour to forward, for the information of the Hon. the Native Minister, my annual report upon the Natives in this district.

During the past twelve months the Natives generally, although a Land Court has been sitting for nearly three months, have conducted themselves very quietly, no serious cases having been brought before me in my capacity as Resident Magistrate, and drunkenness has considerably decreased.

The amount of cultivations amongst the Natives remains much as I reported last year: if anything, it is a little less. But a considerable number of those Natives residing at the south end of the lake have been employed by Mr. A. B. Wright, of the Survey Department, in constructing a road between Poutu, on Lake Rotoaira, and Waimarino, where it strikes the railway-line. These people have been allotted small contracts, and are, I believe, in most instances making good wages.

In the month of September a large Native meeting took place at Poutu, at which Mr. E. S. Thomson, the Clerk of the Court here, was present by my direction to report on behalf of the Government, and a full report of the proceedings was forwarded at the time. Although the resolutions passed at that meeting were adverse to sale or lease of land, Land Courts, &c., I observe that with very few exceptions the signers have been the first to apply to pass their lands through the Court. In fact, I think but little difficulty will be experienced from any of them.

A census of the Maori population was taken in February, when a nominal return of 1,259 was given; but, as the census was taken during the sittings of a Land Court, and as in many instances they refused to give any information whatever, this number must be considered as only approximate.

Dr. Leslie, who has for some months been in medical charge of the district, informs me that there has been a considerable amount of sickness among the Natives, he having attended several hundred cases; and that, especially during the Land Court, there have been an exceptional number of deaths.

I have, &c.,

D. SCANNELL,

Resident Magistrate.

The Under-Secretary, Native Office, Wellington,

No. 10.

Captain PREECE, R.M., Napier, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Resident Magistrate's Office, Napier, 11th June, 1886.

In accordance with the instructions contained in your circular of the 24th March, 1886, No. 2, I have the honour to forward the following report on the district under my charge:—

Napier District.

There has been very little change in the Natives in this district since my last report. The Native Land Court has been sitting almost continuously at Hastings during the past year, and the titles of several large blocks have been investigated.

Industrial Pursuits.—Large quantities of wheat have been grown in this district, chiefly on the Heretaunga Flats. I estimate the yield to be 72,600 bushels. Other crops have been grown by them, but principally for their own consumption. The Natives own a large number of sheep, scattered about in small flocks, numbering in all about twenty thousand. They do not have any steady employment, but a great number of them are engaged on the runs during the shearing season.

Condition of the Natives.—No epidemic has visited the district, but a great number of children have died, and there have been several deaths amongst the adults from low fever and other causes. I regret to report the death of Morena Hawea, a very loyal chief residing at Pourerere, who was for many years a Government pensioner on account of services rendered to the Crown in the early days of settlement in this district; also of Manaena Tini, a chief and Native Assessor residing at Pakowhai.

The number of cases heard in the Resident Magistrates' Courts at Woodville, Ormondville, Waipawa, Napier, and Hastings during the year were as follows: Criminal case, malicious injury—committed for trial, 1; dog registration—convicted, 12; Impounding Act—dismissed 1, convicted 2; drunkenness—convicted, 13; assault—dismissed, 1; sureties of the peace—dismissed, 1; cruelty to animals—convicted, 1; Public Works Act—convicted, 3; larceny—dismissed 2, convicted 1; railway by-laws—dismissed, 2; Land Act, obstructing survey—committed for trial, 2; lunacy, 2. Civil cases: Between European plaintiffs and Maori defendants—number of cases, 126; amount sued for, £1,441 3s. 6d.; recovered, £875 17s. 2d. Between Maori plaintiffs and European defendants—number of cases, 4; amount sued for, £70 13s. 9d.; recovered, £3.

The population of the Resident Magistrate's district over which these cases spread is 1,756 persons.

Wairoa District.

Industrial Pursuits.—The Natives in this district have planted nearly nine hundred acres of wheat, which is estimated to yield about twenty thousand bushels. They own nearly ten thousand sheep, from which they have taken 180 bales of wool. The Natives residing at Te Mahia, in the northern end of the district, have been engaged whaling during the summer and winter seasons. They have captured eighteen whales, which yielded twenty-five tons of oil, worth about £600. A number of the Natives were employed shearing during the summer.

Condition.—An epidemic of whooping-cough visited the district, which was fatal to a number of children, probably owing to the insufficient care shown by the Maori parents during the attack of the disease. The general health of the Natives has been good. The Natives at Nuhaka and Te Mahia have been visited by several American Mormon elders, who have succeeded in making a great number of converts to their faith; in fact, nearly all the Natives of Tahaenui have given up their former creeds and joined the Mormon faith. The wife of one of the elders keeps a school at Nuhaka, which is attended by about forty Native children.

The following cases in which Maoris were concerned were heard in the Resident Magistrate's Court, Wairoa: Criminal and summary cases: Larceny, dismissed, 2; drunkenness, convicted, 2; assault, dismissed, 3; Sheep Act, convicted, 3; Dog Registration Act, convicted, 1. Civil cases: Between European plaintiffs and Maori defendants—number of cases, 34; amount sued for, £194 12s.; recovered, £123 8s. 3d. Between Maori plaintiffs and European defendants—nine cases; amount sued for, £112 18s.; recovered, £16 5s. Between Maoris only—five cases; amount sued for, £133; recovered, £27 15s. 2d.

The population of the Resident Magistrate's district over which these cases are spread is 2,044.

General Remarks.—The ex-rebel Te Kooti passed through the northern end of the Napier District in the latter end of December last. He visited the Native pa at Petane, and proceeded

from there to Wairoa. The Mohaka Natives entrenched themselves in a pa, and threatened to stop his passage through their settlement; but, on it being represented to them that he was merely passing along the public road, they shut themselves up in their pa, and refused to hold any communication whatever with him. He then proceeded to Wairoa, where he was visited by all his old followers and some of the loyal Natives, others expressing their indignation at his impudence in visiting the scenes of his atrocities and parading himself about. I am of opinion that these visits should be discouraged, as they only tend to make the friendly Natives feel more keenly the losses they suffered at his hands many years ago.

Native Lands.—I am still of opinion that the disposal of Native lands should be through the Waste Lands Boards of the colony, and that there should be one or two Natives appointed to each Board, or elected by the Natives of the land district. The charges for survey, commission, and stamp fees should be reduced to the lowest possible scale, in order to make the system popular amongst the Natives, thus promoting settlement of the country.

I have, &c.,

GEORGE A. PREECE,
Resident Magistrate.

The Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

No. 11.

Mr. E. S. MAUNSELL, Native Agent, Greytown, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Greytown North, Wairarapa, 25th April, 1886.

In compliance with the instructions contained in your letter of the 24th March last I have the honour to report on the state of the Maoris in this district.

The result of the census recently taken shows a small increase, chiefly males. Several of the principal men have died during the past year; among these, Manihera Rangitakaiwaho, a prominent chief in the past.

The social state of the Maoris is improving, and good dwellings are taking the place of the Maori whare. At the principal villages, Te Oreore, near Masterton, and Papawai, near Greytown North, very good houses have been built—at Papawai especially—timber being purchased from sawmillers with the proceeds of the sale of totara and other timber, of which large quantities abound. The houses have been erected by themselves in a very creditable manner. A carved house is now in course of construction by a party of the Ngatiporou from near Gisborne. The carvings have occupied about six years in execution, and are of a most elaborate kind. The building will, it is believed, eclipse any similar one in the colony. Much money has been wasted over this house.

It cannot be said that the Natives are less indolent. They look to rents and sale of whatever can conveniently be disposed of to supply temporary wants: cultivation and honest occupation is neglected. Their improvident habits often result in monetary difficulties, and compel them to raise money on crops and timber to satisfy the claims of creditors. What they will do when they have nothing to sell it is difficult to conjecture, unless they part with land. This, at present, they are most reluctant to do. However, in most cases their lands are “restricted from sale;” but where they are free to sell they prefer to go to gaol when pressed by creditors rather than do so, yet at the last moment escape imprisonment by taking extraordinary means to obtain the money.

A good schoolhouse has been built by the Education Department at Papawai, and is attended by European as well as Maori children. It is proposed to convert one of the buildings there into a house for the reception of Maori children from other parts of the district. There is also a school at Te Oreore. No schoolhouse has been built there, owing to the title to the land offered for a site being imperfect.

The Maori Volunteer rifle corps which has been enrolled at Papawai attends regular drill. It is to be hoped that this movement will not die out among the Maoris, for training of a military kind must greatly improve them. Little accustomed to be ruled, any discipline to which they must conform would train them to appreciate good government and would have a civilizing effect.

Politics engage the attention of the Maori only so far as he believes himself concerned.

“The Maori Committees Act, 1883,” has been brought into operation, and the Committee elected; but no chairman has been appointed owing to the absence of two leading men who are engaged as Assessors under the Native Land Court. The members have awaited their return from Gisborne before proceeding to appoint a chairman.

The recent visit of the Native Minister, the Hon. Mr. Ballance, to the district has been much appreciated. At a meeting held at Papawai, and attended by the representative Maoris of the district, Mr. Ballance was most cordially received. He explained the provisions of the Native Lands Administration Bill, as he had done at Hawke’s Bay; and the Natives affirmed the approval given at Waipatu, Hawke’s Bay, to the principle of this Bill. At the Minister’s suggestion it was agreed to appoint a committee of Natives to treat with the Government with a view to place the questions in dispute in regard to the Wairarapa Lakes on a satisfactory basis.

Religion among the Maoris is in a suspended state. They became in the past converts to many faiths. Joining in the early days Christian denominations, their pastors abandoned them and sought other fields. Then Hauhauism became a religion to their way of thinking, only to die out. A faith in "prophets," men who gained great ascendancy over them, lasted for a time. Few of these "prophets" are now alive. No memento of their worth remains. A good "tangi" and a feast commemorated their deaths. Mormon elders have been among them, gaining many converts; but a paucity of women in the district—in the Maori eye a *sine quâ non* in Mormonism—and the call to contribute to the maintenance of these elders influenced them to drop this "karakia" religion. The elders came from Utah, and endeavoured without avail to persuade the leading chiefs to return with them to Salt Lake City. The various church societies cannot be praised on their zeal to evangelize this race. A fair field remains open.

Reviewing the general condition of the Maoris in the Wairarapa, I may report that they are not dying out; they have abundant means for their support in the way of land, but are very lazy, and subsist largely on their wits after their rents have been expended.

The Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington

I have, &c.,

E. S. MAUNSELL.

No. 12.

Mr. R. WARD, R.M., Wanganui, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Resident Magistrate's Office, Wanganui, 24th April, 1886.

In reporting on the state of the Natives in my district, I am glad to be able to say that there is a steady improvement in their moral and religious condition. Their habits of life are more satisfactory in nearly every respect. They have in some parts built better dwellings, and their cultivations, though not large, are sufficient for their requirements, taken in conjunction with their flocks of sheep, herds of cattle, and numerous pigs. In the settled districts they live more like their European neighbours. I am also glad to say that their numbers have kept up during the past five years, particularly in the counties of Rangitikei, Oroua, Manawatu, and Horowhenua. I believe their sober habits are telling advantageously on them. From the census return of those living up the Wanganui River and at Murimotu, there appears to be a decrease of between 600 and 700 on the number of the approximate return of 1881. This decrease is, I am inclined to think, more apparent than real, as it is known that a great many were visiting at Parihaka and other places when the census was taken; still, I am afraid there is in the part of the district indicated somewhat of a decrease. The returns for this census-year for the four counties I have first mentioned show an increase of over two hundred.

The Natives visiting this town from up the Wanganui River and other places in that direction complain of the want of accommodation here. They live in little calico tents, which offer but poor shelter from the inclemency of the weather. What is really required is a large house as a barracks, and another building as a storehouse for their produce when they bring it to the town market. I have tried in vain to find a convenient and suitable site whereon to erect the buildings. On examining the Harbour Board maps I found shown thereon a site set apart for this very purpose, and indicated as a Native reserve; but on looking for the locality I found that it has been submerged by the encroachments of our fine river. I have been, and am still, sorely puzzled to know what to do in this matter. Something will have to be done for these poor people, as they often have to stay in town a long time while attending the sittings of the Native Land Court and in selling their produce, and often suffer very considerable hardship for want of needful shelter.

Churton's College is the means of doing a great deal of good. It is well attended, and the pupils are making most satisfactory progress in their studies and acquirement of refined habits. I am glad to say the school has still the advantage of being under the control and management of Mr. and Mrs. Menzies, than whom none more suitable could be obtained. This school is in the fullest sense of the term a great blessing to many.

I am pleased to be able to say that the Native Land Court has got through an immense amount of work here during the past year: the titles to large blocks of land have been investigated and determined, and the Government have purchased large blocks at fair rates from the Native owners, which will, I understand, in due course be thrown open for settlement. I rejoice also to report that the feeling of the Natives towards the Government seems to be of a most satisfactory character. They realize that they are being dealt with fairly, and that Parliament is actuated by a strong desire to preserve, in a way not to interfere with colonization, the best interests of the Native race. Their chiefs evince a strong wish to do all they can to cement the cordial feeling which exists between them and the pakehas.

I have, &c.,

ROBERT WARD,

Resident Magistrate.

The Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

No. 13.

Mr. W. RENNELL, Reserves Trustee, New Plymouth, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

New Plymouth, 22nd April, 1886.

In accordance with your instructions of the 24th ultimo, I have now the honour to forward you the annual report upon the state of the Natives in my district.

The only event of note that has taken place amongst the Natives in my district during the past year is the increased and still increasing number of Natives travelling about from place to place. Large bodies, from two hundred to over one thousand in number, travel about between White Cliffs and Patea without any apparent object than that of amusing themselves. In some cases they have marched in procession around some of the townships on the coast; but have hitherto behaved in every way as orderly as could be expected from such a number. I have endeavoured to find out if there is any hidden meaning in these processions. Some say it is to assert their right to the confiscated territory: others, that they are wandering about like the Jews in the desert under Moses: but the most intelligent and well-informed hesitate to give a decided opinion. When these gatherings first commenced they naturally attracted a good deal of attention: but they have become so frequent of late that very little notice is taken of them. Sometimes two or three of these journeys are undertaken in a month. They originate at Parihaka, but the leadership is given to one or more influential chiefs to carry out details. Natives were always partial to large meetings, and old Native records are full of proceedings of meetings held by Natives at different times and places, such meetings, as a rule, rarely ending in anything practical. Alarmists among the Maoris themselves say that mischief is brewing; but I can see no sign of it, nor can any of the numerous chiefs I have spoken to on the subject. I have on previous occasions pointed out where possible trouble might arise from a body of Natives, some young and turbulent, riding about the country—namely, that if any dispute arises (especially about impounding horses) there is a danger of their taking the law into their own hands, and, if punished, would go to prison as cheerfully as they did a few years ago when arrested for ploughing.

The influence of Te Whiti is as great as ever over the minds of the majority of the Natives here, particularly between White Cliffs and Patea, and it extends in a weakened degree much farther than that. There has been no special sickness amongst them this year. Education is almost entirely neglected, and cultivation is only carried on to the extent of providing themselves and visitors with food, and growing a few strawberries and similarly easily-raised articles for sale. Near the towns they may bring in a few loads of firewood, but as a rule they do not settle down to anything beyond the supplying of their own immediate wants. The Native census shows an apparent increase in numbers in this district; but I put that down to the boundaries of the district being altered, and to the names of so many Natives being enrolled in hapu-grants, omissions being more easily detected now than formerly: but I am of opinion that as a race they are decreasing considerably. The Te-Whiti-ites still decline as a body to receive their shares of rent for lands leased under West Coast Settlement Acts, and generally hold a mildly-antagonistic attitude to any dealings with their land, either for leasing, rates, roads, or similar matters.

I have, &c.,

W. RENNELL,

The Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

Reserves Trustee.

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