

1888.

NEW ZEALAND.

REPORTS FROM OFFICERS IN NATIVE DISTRICTS.

(In continuation of G.-1, Session II., 1887.)

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, 25th April, 1888.

I have the honour, by direction of the Hon. the Native Minister, to request that you will be good enough to forward at your earliest convenience, but not later than the 31st 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. H. W. BISHOP, R.M., Mangonui, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Resident Magistrate's Office, Mangonui, 29th May, 1888.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your circular letter No. 12, of the 25th April, 1888, and, in compliance with the request conveyed therein, to report as follows upon the state of the Natives in my district :—

I am very pleased to be able to state that the health of the people has been upon the whole very good indeed during the past twelve months, and the rate of mortality has been very low. It is much to be regretted that there is no great change for the better in their mode of living. It seems impossible to convince them that their only hope of securing ordinary immunity in the future from epidemical diseases lies in the erection of a better class of dwelling-houses, and in the choice of more healthy situations for their kainga. I have very little hope that any radical improvement in these respects will take place until the Natives are forced to individualise their land-titles, and thereby encouraged to break up their present communistic style of living.

During the present month a fine old Native has passed away, in the person of Hetaraka Repa. He died at Lower Waihou, in the Hokianga District. He was over seventy years of age, and for many years had been in receipt of a pension of £20 per annum from the Government. He had been presented with a medal for services rendered to the colony during Heke's war, and many tales are told of his acts of daring and of his devotion to the European cause. A few months ago he was thrown from his horse and broke one of his legs, and from the result of this accident he never recovered. There are very few men of his stamp now living, and his loss is much to be regretted.

There is very little drunkenness now amongst the Natives as compared with former years. They are becoming more and more alive to the evil effects of giving way to the temptation of drink, and the result is that there is a great improvement in their moral condition. There is extraordinarily little crime amongst them, and this, too, although there are, according to the last census, some 6,000 Natives residing in my Resident Magistrate's district. It is quite an uncommon thing for a Native to be charged in any of my eight Courts with a really serious offence. I consider that this is a great matter for congratulation. As a rule they readily submit to the jurisdiction of the Court, and, instead of invoking, as in the past, the aid of the Maori Runanga, they now, in most instances, fight out their grievances on the floor of the R.M. Court. As a people they dearly love litigation, and enjoy nothing so much as a good field-day in Court. Each side will generally employ a solicitor, and the interest taken by outsiders in the ingenuity of the "roia" is most absorbing.

During the last three months four Natives have been convicted of sly grog-selling in this district. This is quite a new departure for the Natives; but it transpired in each instance that they were instigated to the commission of the offence by Europeans, who took good care to keep themselves in the background.

The cultivation of the soil is still very much neglected, and few of the people raise more crops than barely suffice for their own subsistence. There is great inducement to neglect in this particular, in the fact that the Natives are able with so little trouble to provide amply for all immediate

requirements by the proceeds of gum-digging. Every kainga in this district is within easy reaching distance of a gumfield, and a few weeks' work by a family during the fine season suffices to provide funds for a long subsequent period of idleness. The belief that kauri-gum is an unfailing source of revenue has a most demoralising effect upon the Native mind.

Whaling is still extensively carried on by the Natives of the northern peninsula during the season. They expend large sums of money in fitting out the various parties, but I think that the average return is very small indeed. The industry, however, has that element of gambling in it which is so dear to the Maori, and therefore funds are never wanting, even under the most discouraging circumstances.

In my last annual report I noted the fact that an element of danger to the public peace existed at Upper Waihou, in the Hokianga district, in the case of a small nest of fanatics, who were holding themselves entirely aloof from the rest of the Natives, and at the same time practising the most preposterous rites and ceremonies. My anticipation of possible trouble was fully borne out by subsequent events. After causing a scare throughout the district, and committing several outrages upon the property of neighbouring Natives, the fanatics, on the 4th July, 1887, seized a settler named Hearn, who was passing by, conveyed him within their enclosure (called "Mount Zion"), stripped him of his clothes, tied him up, and otherwise maltreated him. Upon hearing of this, and receiving certain information from the neighbouring Natives, I decided that, to prevent any more serious acts of fanaticism or lawlessness, it was necessary to take strong measures, and, if possible, to entirely break up the camp. I communicated with Inspector McGovern, who had been recently appointed to the police charge of the Northern District, but who was still at Kawhia, and he hurried here at once, immediately recognising the gravity of the situation. We arranged a course of action which involved the conveying of ten regular constables and ten specials to the locality, in view of possible contingencies. On the 21st July Hearn swore informations against all the Natives who were implicated in the assault upon him, and I issued warrants for their arrest. Full reports of the manner in which the arrest of the fourteen men and nine women was effected have been already furnished to the Government. Suffice it to say they resisted most violently, and, although, unfortunately, it was found necessary to have recourse to arms, I am fully persuaded that it thereby prevented serious loss of life. Most of the Natives concerned were, on the 23rd July, sentenced by me to various terms of imprisonment, and in the case of the ringleaders I ordered each one, at the expiration of his sentence, to find sureties of the peace for a further term. The camp was completely broken up, and those of the Natives who have been since discharged from gaol have scattered among the various settlements in the district. Too much credit cannot be given to Inspector McGovern for the thoroughly able manner in which he carried out his duties, and for the great tact which he displayed. I consider myself extremely fortunate in having the advice and co-operation of so able an officer.

The growth of this fanatical movement was very gradual, and was accompanied by some very peculiar phases. This is scarcely the place to enter into a detailed account of its history; but it evidences the fact that the apparently intelligent Natives are still prone to cling to old superstitions, and are still liable to attacks of fanaticism, in spite of fifty years of civilisation.

I have, &c.,

H. W. BISHOP,
Resident Magistrate.

The Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

No. 3.

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

SIR,—

Native Office, Whangarei, 23rd May, 1888.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 23rd April last, and, in compliance with the request contained therein, to report as follows:—

That the Native population within my district have during the past year conducted themselves in the most orderly and amicable manner. In one instance only has any dispute occurred amongst them—namely, in relation to a sum of £300 royalty for gum derived from land near Poroti, about fourteen miles from Whangarei. This matter is now virtually settled, the principal owners having applied to the Native Land Court to adjudicate upon the block of land from which the royalty was derived, in order to individualise the title. No instances of crime have occurred amongst them. Their health has been fairly good; but a number of deaths have taken place, chiefly of old people, and caused principally by exposure to cold, and in some instances by typhoid fever. The schools have been, save in two or three instances, attended with successful results. Doubtless the report of the Inspector who has lately visited the district will deal with the details. The natural apathy of the parents, and the want of obedience in Native children generally, in a great measure prevents the attendance being so large as it otherwise would be. The Natives have been chiefly employed during the year in gum-digging and cultivating their lands. The timber industry has been almost at a standstill, and has prevented them from engaging in that description of labour.

In concluding my short report, I would beg to remark that the attitude and good feeling of the Native population in the North towards the Government and Europeans generally may be taken as an evidence of the amicable relations existing between the races.

I have, &c.,

JAMES CLENDON,
Resident Magistrate.

The Under-Secretary, Native Office, Wellington.

No. 4.

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

SIR,—

Native Office, Alexandra, 2nd June, 1888.

In accordance with request contained in your circular No. 12, of the 25th April last, I have the honour to forward herewith my annual report upon the Natives in my district. The delay in sending in this report has been caused by my having been engaged during the last two months at the Native Land Court now sitting at Otorohanga.

Health and Social Condition.—There is no change to report under this heading. The general state of health of the Natives has been about the same as it was last year, and no epidemic sickness has appeared amongst them. The only chief of rank who has died is one named Tutata. He died at Waahi, near to Huntly. He belonged to the Waikato tribe called Ngatimahuta, and was related to Tawhiao. He had been an invalid for a number of years, and was a great sufferer from asthma and general debility. His age was about fifty years. Temperance continues to be a very marked feature amongst the Natives, and for which they are entitled to great credit, as the means and sources for obtaining intoxicating drink are as numerous as ever. As a rule the Europeans supply the hotels and intoxicating drinks, with all their evils, and also, as a set-off, perhaps, the teetotal lecturer; but, whilst the Natives have unlimited access to the former, the influence of the latter hardly ever reaches them, as nearly all the temperance lecturers speak in English only, and only address English-speaking audiences; so the temperance principles of the Maori have in most cases originated with himself, possibly from knowledge, dearly acquired, that intoxicating liquors are bad things for them both physically and socially. Knowledge so gained is likely to have a more lasting effect than would the fervid address or array of statistics of the ordinary temperance orator. As there is little railway or road work going on in my district now at which Natives can be employed, those who desire to earn money leave home, sometimes for months together, and journey to the kauri-gum fields in the Hauraki, Kaipari, and districts further north.

Native Land Court in the King-country.—The Native Land Court, which, so far as that portion of the King-country called Rohepotae is concerned, had not, until the 2nd April last, done anything beyond giving its judgment as to the ownership of the whole block (1,636,000 acres) and completing the list of names of owners, is now hard at work subdividing the same. Two lines of large tribal subdivisions (viz., those of Whanganui and Ngatiraukawa) have already been fixed by the Court, and the disputed claims for subdivision of the Ngatihikairo and Ngatimaniapoto portions commencing from the confiscation line, from there about fifteen miles up the Waipa River, and extending over to Kawhia, on the West Coast, are now being heard by the Court. The Natives, who some months ago seemed averse to advancing any stage beyond getting an order for the whole of the land in favour of all the tribes who had proved their ownership to it, have now, thanks to the efforts of some of the more enterprising of them, realised the fact that such a large block as the Rohepotae is cannot remain in one block with about 4,500 owners, and that those owners are not anything like the happy family as to the question of intertribal boundaries and after-policy as to what they shall do with their land that some of the leading chiefs hoped to see would be the case. So that, notwithstanding the advice and strenuous efforts of some of their leaders, the majority appear to have come to the conclusion that the sooner subdivision takes place the better for all parties; and, from the number of applications for subdivision sent in, there is work, I think, for the Court here for several months to come. Judge Mair and Paratene Ngata (who represented the first Native Land Court that sat in this district) are still the Judge and Assessor respectively, and the quiet and decorous way in which the Natives conduct themselves in Court is evidence of the respect in which they hold those officials. For some time past a great deal of soreness has been felt by the Ngatimaniapoto and Ngatiraukawa tribes within this district, because the Chief Judge of the Native Land Court refused their application for a rehearing of that portion of the Taupouiatia Block known as Maraeroa-Hurakia, the boundaries of which were set forth in their application to him for a rehearing. The investigation *re* the Taupouiatia Block took place at Taupo, and was awarded (speaking generally) to Te Heuheu and his people, the Ngatituharetoa, by which award, so far as concerns Maraeroa and Hurakia, the Ngatimaniapoto and Ngatiraukawa consider their interests have been sacrificed. Having failed to obtain a rehearing through the head of the Native Land Court, they have moved the Supreme Court to grant an injunction against anything being allowed to be done affecting the land by the people to whom it was awarded at the Taupo Court, pending the result of a petition for a rehearing which I believe they are about sending or have sent to Parliament. It was thought at one time that the disappointment and soreness felt by the Ngatimaniapoto and Ngatiraukawa at their application for rehearing being refused by the Chief Judge would cause them to block any further proceeding in the Court here *re* subdivision, &c., of the Rohepotae Block (of which they are the principal owners); but, fortunately, that has been averted and the work allowed to proceed, the Natives being content to make use of the courses provided by law for the redress of grievances.

Tawhiao and the King-movement.—During the past year the King-movement—as represented at Whatiwhatihoe, where Tawhiao lives, and which is looked upon as head-quarters—has been getting perceptibly weaker, as evidenced by the few people who now live there, and the increased desire of many who are supposed to live there permanently to get away gum-digging or elsewhere, to shift for themselves. Tawhiao himself, until a short time ago, had been absent for months travelling about with a few of his people from settlement to settlement within the Waikato, Thames, and Piako districts, with apparently very little end in view, the duration of the stay in each place being generally regulated by the amount of food that the local Natives had in stock at the time of his arrival. It has been evident to a close observer that the end could not be far off. Their settlement at Whatiwhatihoe has now been occupied for so many years that it was absolutely necessary that a shift should be made somewhere else, as the producing-powers of the soil in that locality are running out. Looked at from a “King” point of view, it was not possible to move southwards, as

that meant into the Rohepotae Block, which has lately been through the Native Land Court and awarded to Ngatimaniapoto and other tribes (notwithstanding the protest and strenuous efforts of the King party to prevent it), thereby entirely doing away with the mana that Tawhiao (as King) was supposed to have over it, and substituting that of the pakeha law instead. To move northwards meant to move on to land that had been confiscated by Government, and over which law and order has now reigned for years, and which is to a great extent settled upon by Europeans, and the only portions of which available for his occupation (unless he makes terms with the Government) are those that were awarded by the Compensation Court to Natives who were more or less friendly during the war and who are now willing to receive him as a sojourner amongst them. (It is true that he could have gone to Aotea and Kawhia, on the West Coast, to live, as some of his supporters, including some of his own family, have been included in the orders of the Court for those blocks; but that would have meant isolating himself altogether, and entirely removing himself from all that is going on and with what he and some of his people do not want to lose touch.) Add to this the fact that his power as King is practically gone, and his efforts and those of some of his people, formerly so powerful in stopping roads, railways, surveys, &c., are now *nil*, it is easy to understand that he should now see how futile must be any further persistence in isolation and opposition to the Colonial Government and the laws that it makes. That he has done so would appear from the meeting that the Hon. the Native Minister had with him in April last, when he appears to have agreed to accept the proposals made to him by the Minister, except taking the oath of allegiance. (I am not furnishing any report of that meeting, as I was not present at it, being engaged at the time at the Land Court at Otorohanga; but full reports have appeared in the newspapers, and possibly an official report may be furnished by the Under-Secretary, Native Department, who was present. The Hon. the Native Minister also had a meeting with Ngatimaniapoto and other tribes at Otorohanga in April last. He was met by Wahanui, Taonui, Wetere te Rerega, Rewi Maniapoto, Hopa te Rangianini, Mr. John Ormsby, half-caste, and other chiefs and representative men of the tribes. The principal matters referred to by them were "The Native Land Administration Act, 1886," the law regarding rating of Native land, the Native policy of the present Government, and the purchase of Native land by the Crown. With regard to the first, it was asked that the necessity of electing committees from amongst the owners of each block of land, and for that committee to decide what shall be done with the land, as required by "The Native Land Administration Act, 1886," be done away with, and that, instead of it, the individualisation of titles take place as soon as possible, so that each person can do what he likes with his own. It was also asked that "The Native Land Court Act, 1886," may be so altered that Natives may more easily bring their claims before the Court, and at less expense; also, that no person be allowed to sell his interest either to a private purchaser or to Government until it is known what the extent of his interest is. There was also a unanimously-expressed desire to have lawyers precluded from the Court. The Natives also asked that the telegraph be erected between Te Awamutu and Otorohanga, along the Main Trunk Railway line, and that the latter place be connected with Te Awamutu by telephone; also, that some repairs be done to the Alexandra-Kawhia Road. The Hon. the Native Minister addressed the Natives at considerable length, and they were very pleased at what he said and at the way in which he disclosed to them what was the Government policy and intentions regarding Native lands, and the other matters that they had brought before him. Shortly after the Native Minister's visit to Otorohanga the Ngatimaniapoto Natives and others had a meeting with Mr. S. Percy Smith, Assistant Surveyor-General and Crown Lands Commissioner, relative to paying Government the amount due by them for the survey of the Rohepotae Block. It will perhaps be remembered by some that in 1883 the Government agreed with the Natives to survey the whole of the Rohepotae Block for a sum not exceeding £1,600. At that time, however, the Rohepotae Block contained not only the portion that is now called Rohepotae, but also the Taupouniatia Block. The latter, however, has since been cut out and adjudicated upon separately, and has been awarded to the Taupo Natives. It was therefore necessary for Mr. Smith and the Native owners of what is known as the Rohepotae Block to decide what portion of the £1,600 the latter were entitled to pay. The total area of the original Rohepotae Block was 2,630,000 acres, the cost of survey of which was, according to agreement, £1,600. The portion since called Taupouniatia, and awarded to Taupo Natives, contained 1,002,000 acres, which was charged with £607 15s. 4d., leaving a balance of £992 4s. 8d. to be paid by Ngatimaniapoto and others as their portion of the cost of survey of the balance of the area—namely, 1,636,000 acres, now called Rohepotae. The latter sum of £992 4s. 8d. having been agreed upon, it was therefore handed by the Natives to Mr. Smith, and he gave them a receipt in full, and the matter was closed. A section of Natives belonging to Ngatitu, a hapu of Wanganui, who came some years ago to this district from the localities of Foxton, Palmerston North, and Wanganui, and threw in their lot with Tawhiao, have returned during the past year (in February last). They were an industrious, well-behaved, and law-abiding people; and, as there was a considerable number of them, they were an important addition to the King party. Their chief is named Te Kerei, who has gained some notoriety as a prophet. He appears to have got tired of supporting or "playing second fiddle," so to speak, to Tawhiao and the King party (possibly through the mana and influence of the latter having decreased so much lately, and through his own, as a prophet, having increased); so he and his people decided to leave, and have returned to their different homes.

Native Committees.—The two Native Committees that were elected in the Waikato District in accordance with "The Native Committees Act, 1883," have very much languished, and it is thought that they will collapse altogether. One reason, I think, for their not being a success was because the Committee districts were altogether too large, some of the members having to travel over fifty miles to attend a meeting of Committee. Another reason is that they are not properly supported by the *tino rangatiras*, or principal chiefs, the reason, perhaps, being that the Committee appeared to usurp the power that principal chiefs think should rest only in them—viz., the power of saying what shall or shall not be done with regard to matters that concern the whole tribe. Another

reason, possibly, was the very limited powers given to the Committees, as they can only act where both parties to a suit are agreeable to put the matter into their hands. But I think the most important reason—that is, so far as this district is concerned—is the fact that, now the land is being passed through the Court, and settlement is commencing to take place, the owners of the land see that property in land means money and social position, and they prefer each one to look after his own rather than trust their affairs to the hands of a Committee, some of the members of which may be, or have been, in opposition to them regarding claims to land, &c.

Native Schools.—The Native schools within my districts—viz., at Kopua, Te Waotu, Tapapa, Waitetuna, and Kirikiri (Thames)—are in a fairly flourishing condition, that at Te Waotu being the best so far as attendance goes. There is generally a difficulty experienced in first establishing a school in a Native district, especially where the ownership of the land in the locality is disputed, and has not been decided by the Native Land Court. But when once the school is established the Natives recognise and take advantage of the value of education by making their children attend it. One of the great drawbacks, however, is the irregularity of the attendance of the scholars, as when the parents go away on gum-digging and other expeditions they generally take their children with them. Taken as a whole, however, I think both the Education and Native Departments can be congratulated on the success that is attending their efforts to educate the young Maoris of the present generation. The attendance at the Kopua School would be much increased during the winter months if two of the creeks near to the school had small wire suspension-bridges put over them, as they have both to be crossed by nearly all the children who live to the west or north of the school, and, as these creeks are nearly always in flood during about four or five months of the year, the children run a great risk in attempting to ford them or cross over in small canoes. A request to have this done was made by the Natives to the Hon. the Native Minister at his meeting with Ngatinaniapoto at Otorohanga.

The record of crime and misdemeanour amongst the Natives and half-castes within the Waikato, Te Aroha, Ohinemuri, Thames, and Coromandel districts during the past year has been very small indeed.

I have, &c.,

G. T. WILKINSON,
Government Native Agent and Land-purchase Officer,
Waikato, Thames, and Auckland.

The Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

No. 5.

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

SIR,—

Resident Magistrate's Office, Opotiki, 8th May, 1888.

In reply to your circular letter of the 25th ultimo I have the honour to furnish the usual annual report on the Natives in the district under my charge.

Condition of the Natives.—There appears to be a gradual improvement taking place in the condition of the Natives in this portion of my district, but it is scarcely perceivable to any one who does not make it his business to carefully watch the Maoris. In a few years, when it becomes more general, I have no doubt it will be more perceptible. Year by year the Natives appear to be better supplied with clothing and other necessaries of life. In this locality they are becoming quite self-reliant: such a thing as asking the Government for carts, ploughs, or other agricultural implements has quite gone out of fashion, so much so that no Native ever thinks of making a request for such articles. At first I experienced considerable difficulty in persuading them to give up making application for such things; but by degrees they seemed to acknowledge that it was better to rely upon themselves for these articles than to beg them from the Government, and now such an application is an unheard-of thing in this portion of the district. The Natives here have maintained their character for sobriety and orderly behaviour. Since the last report only sixteen Natives have been convicted of drunkenness; three charged with larceny, of whom two were convicted; three charged with assault, of whom two were convicted; and one convicted of furious riding. In the Resident Magistrate's Court not as many cases have taken place amongst the Natives this year as in previous ones, but in all the cases the judgments have been satisfied. The doctor has been freely used by the Natives during the past year; but I am happy to report no serious epidemic has taken place amongst them. It is strange that the Maori, with the proofs of many cures in really serious cases before his eyes, should tamper with himself after paying the doctor a visit or two; the more so as in nearly all such cases the patient generally dies. The Native treatment seldom cures; indeed, it cannot in any serious case, which requires professional care, strict course of diet, and careful nursing: yet, with marvellous recoveries in cases attended by the doctor before them, they are still satisfied to allow themselves to become victims to their old superstitions. Time and perseverance appear to be the only means by which we can hope ultimately to prevent their sacrificing their lives to their old Native customs. The doctor spares neither time nor trouble in attending to their wants, and many Natives are indebted to his care and attention for their recoveries. Many Natives have lost their lives during the past two years through following the practice of immersing themselves in cold water with their clothes on, and then allowing them to dry on their bodies. This is done when a relation dies and is buried. It is said to be a part of the Te Kooti faith. Anything more suicidal cannot be conceived. However, lately the Natives have not practised this part of the ceremony, it having been pointed out by me to them that if they persisted in following this practice they would very soon bury the last of their number. The effects of the late Tarawera eruption appear to have passed away, and those Natives who left Whakatane and Te Teko for Galatea, at Kooti's instruction, have all returned to their former kaingas.

Disposition.—The conduct of the Natives throughout the past year has been peaceful and friendly. Kooti-ism still appears to be the only disturbing element amongst them. Those Natives

who have not adopted that faith are uneasy at its spread, and are in doubt as to what will come out of it in the future. Many surmises are indulged in. The Kooti-ites are, however, most reticent. There is no doubt that Kooti exercises great influence over his adherents, as it is currently stated here that the wages earned by the Natives in this district are all handed over to certain chiefs to form a fund for Te Kooti. It must be admitted that, if any man has such a hold as this on a large section of the Natives, his power over them must be great indeed. The Natives must be thoroughly imbued with his omnipotence to go as far as this. Hira te Popo's people were great sufferers through Kooti's last visit, which swamped the whole of their last year's maize-crop, and left them in debt besides. They are not satisfied with that, but are and have been making preparations ever since his last visit to entertain him again. He is to make another visit here this winter. It is a pity something cannot be done to prevent these large Native gatherings, which simply mean the leaving of the Native hosts to starve for the rest of the year. The Te Kooti-ite monthly meetings have been held as heretofore, much to the detriment of the Natives.

Crops.—The crops this year throughout the district are unusually good. Much larger areas have been grown this year than last, especially at Torere, Maraenui, Omaio, Te Kaha, and Raukokore.

Public Works.—The Ngaitai have been engaged widening the road between Opopo and Torere, and the Whanau a Apanui in making the road over the cliff from Hanai to Maraenui.

Native Schools.—The nine schools in this district have been in full working-order during the past year, the attendance at most of them has considerably increased since the Christmas holidays, since which time the parents have carried out a promise made that they would send all the available children to the schools. In three schools this has taken place. I, however, could not help noticing, when looking up the children at the different settlements, when down the coast at Christmas time, that there were only a very few children—few or no babies.

Maketu.—I have visited Maketu periodically as heretofore, and held the Courts there. For some months a Native Land Court has been sitting at Maketu; consequently a great number of Natives have been assembled there. Notwithstanding this influx of population, the conduct of the Natives has been fairly good, judging from the cases brought before me in the Police Court. No offences of a serious nature have taken place. The Natives here appear to have cropped more extensively this season than they are in the habit of doing. This, no doubt, is attributable to the fact of finding themselves so hard-pushed for food last year. A new Roman Catholic Church has been erected here; but a great number of the Natives, especially the Ngatipikiao, under Te Pokiha, have a religion of their own, with Himiona te Orinui as prophet. This religion is somewhat similar to Te Kooti's. There must be three or four different sects at Maketu, judging from the number of church-bells that ring morning and evening.

Tauranga.—Having only just relieved Mr. Brabant of his duties in this part of the Bay of Plenty, I am not in a position to report very fully on the state of the Natives, or to remark on any special improvements that may have taken place, but hope next year to be able to furnish a full report on the state of the Natives in this part of my district. This must also apply to the Rotorua portion, which I have not yet had an opportunity of visiting. While in Tauranga last month, hearing the Papamoa personation cases, I saw a good many of the Natives who reside in the vicinity of Tauranga. These appeared to be healthy and well clothed. I also understand their crops are very fair, and that they have cultivated more wheat this year than usual. This, no doubt, is attributable to the fact of the repairs to the Wairoa mill, which I believe Hori Ngatai intends working this winter. The so-called Maori King, Tawhiao, has paid the Tauranga Natives a visit; but it would appear that his mana as King of the Maoris is simply nominal, and no importance need be attached to his late visit. It was simply one of Maori custom, which are made by different sections of Natives periodically, generally to cry over persons deceased since the previous meeting of the two tribes. I am not aware that any political signification is attached to it; I am of opinion that there is none. The fact of the Waikato Kingites leaving the Ngatimaniapoto territory is quite sufficient to destroy the little King authority which remained to Tawhiao. Many Natives from Tauranga district are away at Mercury Bay kauri-gum digging, the exodus from this Bay for this purpose being pretty extensive. Hori Ngatai and some forty others accompanied Mr. Taipua, M.H.R., to the West Coast upon his leaving Tauranga the other day. I believe their object was to be present at a large meeting to be held at Wanganui.

I have, &c.,

R. S. BUSH,

The Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

Resident Magistrate.

No. 6.

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

SIR,—

Resident Magistrate's Office, Napier, 18th May, 1888.

In accordance with the instructions contained in your circular No. 12, of the 25th ultimo, I have the honour to forward the following report of the state of the Natives in this district:—

Napier District.

Notwithstanding the very dry weather the Native crops of wheat and oats have yielded large returns, particularly at the settlements of Waohiki, Omaha, and Waipatu. A great number of Natives were engaged shearing during the season, and several of them have taken large contracts from the runholders for bush-clearing. They seem to have taken more to work this season than they generally do: this I attribute to the fact that there has been a dearth in the land-selling market.

There has been very little sickness amongst the Natives. I regret to report the death of the brave and loyal chief Renata Kawepo, which took place at Omaha on the 14th ultimo. The deceased chief had sent invitations to a large number of Natives to attend a Native meeting to be held at Omaha on the 16th April. He was very anxious to see everything carried out, and exposed himself in superintending the building of a Native meeting-house. He caught a chill, and had to take to his bed; and, although every attention was shown to him, he died on the Saturday before the meeting was to take place. This chief was one of the few remaining men of the old stamp: he was a man whose word was his bond, and who in no way deteriorated through being mixed up with land-matters, as is, I regret to say, the case with many Natives.

Disposition of Native Lands.—The Natives have not in any way availed themselves of the provisions of "The Native Lands Administration Act, 1886." They look on the clauses with respect to placing the land in the hands of Native Committees with great suspicion. I think that the Act might have worked if it had been shorn of those clauses. The Natives do not care about placing reliance in people of their own race: they have learned experience by the Act of 1865, when the land was placed in the hands of ten grantees, the Natives being under the impression that they were only holding in trust for the benefit of the tribe; whereas Crown-grants were issued to them, and they dealt with the lands as absolute owners. I am of opinion that, whatever mode of alienation of Native lands is adopted by the Legislature, that it will be necessary the titles should be individualised as much as possible by the Native Land Court before sales are allowed to take place. This could be done either by subdivision or by ascertaining the proportionate interest of the several owners in each block as it passes through the Native Land Court. I am satisfied that a great deal of time, and trouble, and expense can be saved by subdividing the land immediately after it has been adjudicated upon in large blocks. The Judges who have heard the evidence of the contending parties could come to a better decision as to their relative interests than other Judges hearing the case years after, with only the notes of the original case before them, and other witnesses, and the land having been occupied in the interval under altogether different circumstances.

The following cases in which Maoris were concerned have been heard in the Resident Magistrates' Courts at Napier, Hastings, Waipawa, Ormondville, and Woodville, viz. :—

Criminal Cases.—False pretences—convicted, 1; Sheep Act—discharged, 1; dismissed, 4; Police Offences Act—convicted, 3; discharged with caution, 1; borough by-laws—convicted, 2; discharged with caution, 1; drunkenness—convicted, 14; dismissed, 1; contempt of court—dismissed, 1.

Civil Cases.—European plaintiffs, Maori defendants: Amount sued for, £1,987 5s. 9d.; recovered, £1,489 8s. 7d. Maori plaintiffs, European defendants: Sued for, £50 2s.; recovered, £30 1s. 6d. Maori v. Maori, nil.

Wairoa District.

The Natives of this district have grown about 4,600 bushels of wheat, 4,500 bushels of oats, and 8,000 bushels of maize. At Mahia they caught thirty whales, of the value of about £300; but owing to the low price ruling for whale-oil the Natives have not taken such interest this year in this industry as in previous years. About 155 bales of wool have been sold by the Natives from the different flocks of sheep during this season.

The following cases in which Natives were concerned were heard in the Resident Magistrate's Court at Wairoa during the year, viz. :—

Criminal Cases.—Malicious injury to property—dismissed, 1; forgery—committed for trial, 1; burglary—discharged, 1; Public Works Act—convicted, 1; Police Offences Act—convicted, 3; drunkenness—convicted, 7.

Civil Cases.—European plaintiffs and Maori defendants: Amount sued for, £176 3s. 11d.; recovered, £88 16s. 4d. Maori plaintiffs and European defendants: Amount sued for, £40 8s.; recovered, £16 4s. Maori plaintiffs and Maori defendants: Amount sued for, £165 7s. 8d.; recovered, £56 15s. 2d.

A large number of applications for subdivision and succession claims have been made in this district, and the Natives have been very much dissatisfied at the fact of the claims having been accumulating for the last three years without being disposed of. This, however, will now be settled, as the Court is now sitting in the district, where it will have a considerable amount of work to get through.

General Disposition of Natives.—There is a thoroughly good feeling existing between the Natives and Europeans; they frequently join the Europeans in athletic sports, cricket, football, &c. There have been no disturbing influences amongst them this year, and the friendly Natives were pleased at the action of the Government in preventing Te Kooti from parading the district where he committed such atrocities a few years ago amongst both Europeans and Natives.

I have, &c.,

GEORGE S. PREECE,
Resident Magistrate.

The Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

No. 7.

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

SIR,—

New Plymouth, 26th May, 1888.

Replying to your letter of the 25th April last, I have the honour to state that there is very little of any political importance in Native matters to report in my district.

The past year has been the quietest for many years past, and no rumours of what Te Whiti was going to do to disturb the peace have been heard lately. The Parihaka meetings have decreased in number, and the comparatively few assemblages have not been so numerously attended.

I understand that the village of Parihaka itself has been considerably improved lately, and more houses are being built there. Te Whiti still holds great sway over the minds of the majority of the Natives of the district, but his sayings and doings are not paraded now as formerly.

The Natives have no special industrial occupations outside their usual cultivations, but employ themselves at times in picking fungus, and, in the season, gathering grass-seed. Schooling is neglected except in a few cases, and the majority of the younger people cannot write their names, whereas the elder generation can nearly all write fairly.

At and about Patea, and southwards, the Parihaka influence is not so strong, the Natives having taken to a form of European worship; but whether it has any strong hold on them is a question. In the last-mentioned part of the district an agitation is going on for the purpose of obtaining more power to deal with their lands themselves, and this feeling has been intensified lately by the passing of "The West Coast Settlement Reserves Acts Amendment Act, 1887," as the owners of the land feel aggrieved at the clauses which enable the lessees to obtain new leases without the consent of the grantees, at a rental to be computed on the unimproved value of the land comprised in the leases; whereas under their present leases all improvements were to go to the owners of the land at the end of the term of lease: and, as some of the leases have expired since the passing of the Act, or are about shortly to expire, the Natives are aggrieved at the innovation, which they consider detrimental to their interests. In the northern end of the district, however, very little interest is displayed beyond a passive resistance to any law emanating from Parliament, arising principally from the sympathy with Te Whiti, although many individual Natives would be glad to see restrictions on their management of their own land relaxed.

The Native Land Court has sat and adjudicated on considerable blocks of land, but the Te Whiti-ites have held aloof, allowing matters to go by default where their interests were concerned, as they have done for many years past in similar matters.

The health of the Natives has been fairly good, there having been no special epidemic amongst them; but disease and death is much more rife with the Native race than amongst a similar number of Europeans. The most noted Native death which has happened in my district during the year is that of the old Patea chief, Taurua who for many years had held a high place in the esteem of Europeans and Natives of his district, and all along the coast.

I have, &c.,

W. RENNELL,

Reserves Trustee.

The Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

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