

1892.

NEW ZEALAND.

REPORTS FROM OFFICERS IN NATIVE DISTRICTS.

[In continuation of G.-5, 1891.]

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

No. 1.

The ACTING UNDER-SECRETARY to the OFFICERS of NATIVE DISTRICTS.

SIR,—

Native Office, Wellington, 26th May, 1892.

I have the honour, by direction of the Hon. Mr. Cadman, to request you will be good enough to furnish, with as little delay as possible, the usual annual report on the state of the Natives in your district, for presentation to Parliament.

I have, &c.,
W. J. MORPETH,
Acting Under-Secretary.

No. 2.

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

SIR,—

Auckland, 24th June, 1892.

In compliance with the request conveyed in your Circular No. 7, of the 26th May last, I have the honour to report as follows on the state of the Natives in my district:—

During the past year the health of the Maoris has been most remarkably good as compared with previous years. The only epidemic that came to my knowledge occurred at Te Rawhiti, in the neighbourhood of Russell. There, a number of Natives were seized with a kind of low fever, with symptoms of an aggravated nature. All of those attacked were, very wisely, immediately removed by their friends to Russell, where they could procure remedies and proper attention, and to this movement is probably attributable the fact that of those attacked by the epidemic only two died.

I cannot say that this immunity from sickness generally is in any way due to improvement in the mode of living of the Natives. If there is any change for the better it is quite imperceptible. In an isolated case here and there a Native may build for himself and family a better class of residence, and may strive to conform more closely to the ordinary laws of health, but, as a rule, the bulk of the people cling to the old style. This means the establishing of settlements in low-lying swampy localities; the crowding of men, women, and children at night into low whares, in an atmosphere that is simply appalling; the constant change, under these conditions, from extreme heat to damp cold; utter carelessness in the matter of dress, being one day muffled up to the throat in numerous wraps, and on the next almost naked. These are a few of the causes of fatal pulmonary complaints, so extremely prevalent amongst the Maoris. Warning is thrown away. They admit the evil, but disregard the consequences.

A Native of considerable note has lately died, in the person of Paora Tuhaere. He resided at Orakei, near Auckland, and was a well-known figure in the streets of the city. He exercised considerable influence over the Natives in this district, and was much respected.

A very large meeting was lately held at Waitangi, in the Bay of Islands, on the site of the first signing of the Treaty of Waitangi. These meetings have become annual affairs. They involve a great deal of talk, and a vast consumption of food. They foster and encourage a spirit of unrest amongst the Maoris, and result invariably in nothing practical being done. This last meeting was no exception to the rule. The same subjects come up year after year for discussion, and chief among these is the matter of the enforcement of the Dog Registration Act. This is always a burning question, and seems to put quite in the shade what might reasonably be considered more important matter.

One very important subject for congratulation in connection with the social state of the Natives is their ever-increasing sobriety. This becomes more noticeable every year, and drunkenness is now considered a perfect disgrace. There are, however, a few places in the North where the resident

Natives unfortunately show themselves to be the exception to what I may term the rule. I am always, however, hoping for an improvement. It will answer no good end to particularly specify the localities. I referred to them in my last report.

The schools throughout the North are still fairly well supported in the matter of attendance and interest, but there is room for improvement. Many Natives are strongly in favour of power being conferred on Committees to enforce attendance at the schools. The subject has already engaged the attention of the Education Department.

I have, &c.,

H. W. BISHOP,

Resident Magistrate.

The Acting Under-Secretary, Native Office, Wellington.

No. 3.

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

SIR,—

Native Office, Otorohanga, 28th June, 1892.

In accordance with request contained in your Circular No. 7, of the 26th ultimo, I have the honour to forward herewith my annual report on the state of the Natives in my district.

WAIKATO, WAIPA (KING-COUNTRY), AND THAMES.

Health.

The health of the Natives in the above-mentioned districts has been fairly good during the past year. They have, fortunately, so far, escaped the severe epidemics of typhoid and other malignant fevers that Natives on the East Coast and North of Auckland have suffered from, although they have occasionally been attacked by influenza, accompanied by a sort of low fever and general prostration, which, in a few cases, principally those of children, has ended fatally. I regret to have to report the death of two young men, within the last fortnight, from eating honey. They belonged to a settlement called Mangaorongo, about ten miles from here. It appears that whilst in the bush they came across a tree that contained honey, which they ate of plentifully, with the result that on their return home they were taken ill with severe pains, and, although emetics were given to them, and the Maori remedy of placing them in water was resorted to, they died in great pain. The Natives account for the fact of bush-honey being poisonous at this time of the year because it is now that the small plant called *waoriki* that grows in moist swampy places is in flower, and they say that the honey that bees extract from it is of a poisonous nature, and is likely to be fatal when eaten in excess. There is no medical officer for Natives in this district, and no one to distribute medicines to them—Mrs. Berry, who used to perform that duty, having left the district. The Natives have therefore to take their chance between the local Maori *tohunga*, or doctor, and the few proprietary medicines that are on sale at the local stores. The only death of importance that has taken place in this district during the past year has been that of the well-known chief Hone te One (*anglice*, John Jones), who died at Kawhia on the 16th instant, aged about eighty-two years. Hone te One was a well-known character during the time of the Waikato war, in 1863–64, and he, with Wiremu Nero (William Naylor) and Major Te Wheoro, were noted at that time for the loyalty they displayed to the Queen, and the assistance they and their people gave to the European forces, both civil and military; and, subsequent to the Waikato war, when the Compensation Courts were held in Waikato for the purpose of returning to the friendly Natives their land that had been included in the Proclamation of confiscation, Hone te One was of great assistance to Mr. James Mackay, the Civil Commissioner at that time, and also to the officers of the Compensation Court. He was a kindly, well-disposed man, and was respected by Europeans of all classes who knew him. He had been in receipt of a Government pension for many years prior to his death. I may also mention here (although it did not occur within my district) the death of the chief Paora Tuhaere, of Auckland. He died on the 12th March last. Paora (or Paul) was such a well-known character in and about Auckland, and his loyalty and friendship to Europeans since the days of the early settlement of Auckland is so well known, that I need not expatiate upon them here, more especially as the Auckland newspapers published his biography at the time of his death. He, also, had been a Government pensioner for a number of years.

Social Position.

The social position of the Natives in the Upper Waikato and King-country is not much changed since my last report. The absence of European settlement amongst them naturally makes their progress towards civilisation rather slow. It is satisfactory, however, to be able to report that they still remain remarkably temperate, and crime of a serious nature is very rare amongst them. Those of them who can afford to do so have had wooden houses built for themselves; but I must say that in most cases the houses are built more from a feeling of pride on the part of the owners at being able to say that they own a wooden house than from any desire to occupy it permanently themselves. There is a want of sociability about a wooden house that makes it unsuitable to the Maori mind (and body) for permanent residence. They cannot sit all round the fire as in the case of the fire in the centre of the Maori whare. They do not feel so at home, or at ease, on the boarded floor of the pakeha house as on the fern and mat-covered floor of the Maori whare; in fact, to occupy one for any length of time entails upon them a state of existence quite foreign to what they have been used to; so that, apart from the uncomfortableness (to them) of it, there is the fact that it is more difficult to keep clean. It is no wonder, therefore, that a Maori possessor of a wooden house is not long before he is on the look-out for a European tenant for it.

The Natives in the King-country continue to run sheep upon their waste lands; but their success has not been great during the past year, and I quite expect that in a few years they will give

it up altogether. The Native idea with regard to sheep appears to have been that there was no more difficulty in breeding them than in breeding pigs, and that all they had to do was to turn them out amongst the grass on the limestone-hills and they would increase naturally; the actual labour being confined to tailing the lambs and clipping the wool from the sheeps' backs. They now find that more labour than that is required, and that unless sheep are well and constantly looked after, and their ailments quickly discovered and means taken to cure them, they will not thrive. It appears, also, that the sheep that most of them got in the first instance were old and diseased, and were of a breed not suitable to this kind of country. The result has been that most of the flocks are suffering more or less from lung-worm and other diseases that sheep are heir to, or easily acquire; consequently the mortality amongst both sheep and lambs during the past year has been very great. One or two of the intelligent half-castes have already given up keeping sheep, and are going in for cattle and the breeding of a superior class of pigs, expecting to get better results from them than from sheep.

The Natives throughout the King-country are not a very industrious class—that is, they do not grow more food than they require for their own consumption. Sometimes small patches of a few acres of wheat, or oats, or maize may be seen which are being grown for sale, but they are rare.

Religion.

In my last year's report I referred to the attempt that was being made by the Church of England and Wesleyan religious bodies to revive the religious element in the hearts of the King-country Natives. I am sorry to say, however, that, so far as outward and visible signs are concerned, their efforts have not yet met with much success. The Wesleyan Native preacher who was stationed at Kopua some time ago still remains at his post, but, with that exception, the efforts of the religious bodies that I referred to in my last report seem to have ceased.

Native Schools.

The Native school at Kopua still remains closed, but the others—viz., those at Otorohanga, Te Waotu, Tapapa, and Kerikeri (Thames), continue to be fairly attended, but not so much so as they should be considering the number of children that reside in the localities of the above-mentioned schools. The want of thought on the part of the parents in not enforcing a better attendance by the children shows that they are careless and indifferent, and that they do not realise the advantage of education, or appreciate the desire for their welfare and advancement that Government has shown in erecting schools and supplying teachers for the present generation of Maori children.

Proposed Licensed Hotel at Otorohanga.

Considerable public comment has lately been passed on the proposal to grant a license to the Temperance Hotel, at Otorohanga, to sell spirituous liquors, and a very determined effort is being made by the Good Templar or ultra-temperate party in New Zealand to prevent the license being granted, they believing that it will result in harm, both mental and physical, to the Natives. As the King-country, however, is no longer the purely Native district that it was eight years ago, when licenses to sell liquor were prohibited throughout the district at the request of the Natives, and as the action of the Government, the Press, and the public generally has within the last few years been of such a nature as to induce Europeans to flock into the country for the purpose of visiting the Waitomo Caves, to view land for settlement, and to construct railway- and road-works under the Public Works Acts, it follows that the position is different now to what it was then; and that whereas at that time there was only the wants and interests of the Maori race to consider, now there are those of both Maori and European. It is not my place as a Government officer to criticize the action taken by the temperance party in this matter, for whether they are justified or not in what they are doing is merely a matter of opinion; but there can be no doubt, I think, that they are actuated by a desire to protect the Natives from what they believe will result in evil consequences to them. I think, however, I am right in pointing out that in this, as in European communities, it is the wishes of the people of the district, or the majority of them, that have to be considered, and in the present case the Natives have decidedly shown by petition and otherwise that they desire to have the house at Otorohanga licensed. The reason for their action is not far to seek. The house is kept by an intelligent and respectable half-caste—one of their own people—and his wife, and it is the only house in the locality where travellers can obtain accommodation in the shape of board and bedding for themselves and stabling for their horses. The house is used almost exclusively by Europeans, and they, or the majority of them, look upon it as a hardship if they cannot get the same accommodation there as at hotels in other places. The landlord is therefore prevailed upon to supply them with what they want, although he is breaking the law in doing so. There is also the fact that being an unlicensed house makes it a mark for European detectives and policemen, who lay themselves out to entrap the landlord or his wife into selling them a glass of spirits, and numerous and questionable are the devices they adopt to catch their victim. Now, the chiefs in this district note that the people who require the liquor are mostly Europeans, and that the detectives and those whom they make use of to assist them in catching the landlord in breaking the law are also Europeans, and they fail to see why one of their people should be made to suffer solely for the sake of and by the agency of the pakeha. Hence they say, in effect, "Otorohanga is at present the focus of European population in the King-country. These people require, and will have, liquor. Let them therefore have it. License the hotel, so that the landlord can supply the wants of these people without risk to himself, and let it be under the supervision of the police, of which there is a representative resident at Otorohanga; but let this be the only licensed house in the district, because it is there, and only there, that it is said to be wanted." The above is, I think, a fair statement of the case as looked at from a Native point of view, and, although one cannot help sympathizing with the

temperance party in the action they are taking, which is really for the welfare of the Natives, I do not see what is to be done in the face of the fact that the views and wishes of the Natives are against them. Had the Natives themselves been divided in opinion, and had one section of them expressed themselves as strongly against the Otorohanga hotel being licensed as the other section was in favour of it, there would be good reason for withholding the license, for a time at least. But we do not find that it is so. I mention this in order to show that, if a license is granted for the Otorohanga hotel, it will be because the travelling European public require it, and the Natives have asked for it, and for no other reason.

Résumé of the Past Year.

Since my last report, the Native, Kerei Kaihau, who made himself so notorious last year by destroying a trig-station at Waitakaruru, Thames, and who, on his trial at the Supreme Court, was let off on the condition that he paid the expenses incurred in his prosecution—which, by-the-bye, he never did pay—again distinguished himself by pulling down other trig-stations and obstructing Government surveyors at Waiuku. Kerei Kaihau's case shows that leniency is only thrown away upon men of his class, and that it does not have the deterrent effect it was hoped it would have. The breaches of the law that they commit and the reasons they have in their minds for committing them are not to be cured in that way. They are really crimes with a political motive, and are done purposely and in defiance of the law, and, presuming the perpetrators of the crime to be in the wrong, it requires the law to be sharply, and not leniently, administered to effect a cure. The persistence of Kerei Kaihau to continue his action in destroying Government trig-stations has this time met its reward, and the Supreme Court has sentenced him to a term of twelve months imprisonment. Having referred to Te Mahuki, I may state that the term of twelve months imprisonment that he and his followers were sentenced to for their action in taking forcible possession of Mr. Ellis's store at Te Kuiti in October, 1890, and generally alarming the people of this district by their fanatical actions, has had a very salutary effect upon them all, and since their release they have conducted themselves as rational beings.

Tawhiao's Visit to Otorohanga and Te Kuiti.

In the early part of December last Tawhiao, the Maori King, paid a visit to the Natives of Otorohanga and Te Kuiti. He was accompanied by his sister, Te Ako, and about one hundred of his people. The purpose of his visit was to return the bones of an important Ngatimaniapoto chief, named Te Wetini, who belonged to Te Uira, near Te Kuiti, but who had died and been buried at Hikurangi when Tawhiao and his people were living there in 1876-78, and whose bones were afterwards taken to Whatiwhatihoe, after the King party had removed from Hikurangi to there. As Tawhiao had not visited Ngatimaniapoto since the majority of them under Wahanui and Taonui split from him, in 1883, and started the Rohepotae, with its subsequent sittings of Land Court, its surveys, roads, railways, and land-selling, his visit on this occasion was made a great deal of by the Ngatimaniapoto people both at Otorohanga and Te Kuiti, and political capital was endeavoured by some to be made out of their action; although, so far as Tawhiao was personally concerned, he distinctly told them that he had come for no other purpose than to see the people. There is no doubt that a great many of Ngatimaniapoto still look on Tawhiao with feelings of affection and even reverence; and some of them have always been steadfast in their allegiance to him, although in a minority. It is quite natural, therefore, that they should make a great deal of him during his visit, more especially when it is considered that he was honouring them by carrying out an important Maori custom in returning to them the bones of one of their principal chiefs, who had died whilst living with him. During the two days that he stayed at Otorohanga there was quite a temporary revulsion of feeling in his favour; and it was freely said by some that all Ngatimaniapoto had gone back to Tawhiao, and had rejoined the King party; but those who knew the Native character well noted that Wahanui did not attend the meeting until an hour before Tawhiao left, and then only as a matter of compliment to Tawhiao himself, and that Taonui was not there at all, plainly saw that what some took for a return of the people to Tawhiao was nothing more than an ebullition of friendly feeling on their part, because Tawhiao, who they once acknowledged as King, had come to visit them after years of absence, and whose advent amongst them called to their minds numerous reminiscences of the past; but that when he had left, and the excitement of doing honour to him had passed away, they would again revert to their former attitude. This turned out to be the case; for, within a few days after Tawhiao's departure, the date of the approaching visit of the Hon. the Native Minister to Otorohanga was notified, and—such is the changeableness of the Maori mind—those who a few days before had said all, and done all they could to please their visitors of the King party, were now to be found eagerly discussing such matters as roads, surveys, sales, and leases of land, &c.—the very things that it is part of the creed of the King party to do away with.

Visit of Hon. Native Minister to Otorohanga.

The first of the two visits paid by the Hon. Mr. Cadman to the Natives of Otorohanga was made in December last. He was met as usual by Wahanui, Taonui, Mr. Henry Edwards (half-caste), and the principal chiefs of the Ngatimaniapoto Tribe. When he paid them a previous visit in April of last year they expressed a strong desire to have the Government restriction against private dealings with Rohepotae lands removed. Since then, however, they had changed their minds—that is, so far as selling is concerned, and on his visit to them in December last they made the following propositions to him: (1.) That certain blocks of land should be sold to Government, but the Native owners and Government should conjointly fix the price per acre. (2.) That in cases where they desired to sell any blocks (not under purchase by Government) to private purchasers that the restriction against selling should be removed from those blocks only at the request of the owners, but that it should remain in force over all other blocks. (3.) That there should be no

restriction against leasing by private individuals. There was also a fourth proposal, asking the Minister to use his power in getting the present Native land-laws amended, and made more suitable and less obnoxious to the Natives.

Hon. Mr. Cadman promised to lay the matter before his colleagues on his return to Wellington, and to let the Natives know the result when he met them later on. This he did do in the early part of May last, when he again visited them, and told them that he was prepared to accede to their proposals if they could give him any guarantee that the owners of the blocks which the Crown desired to acquire would agree to come forward and sign the necessary deeds of transfer of the same within a reasonable time. This at once brought the matter to a head, and disclosed the fact of the utter inability of any body of Natives, notwithstanding that they may be chiefs and leaders of public opinion, to bind the owners of any block of land to sell the same. Men like Wahanui, Taonui, Henry Edwards, and others had to admit that such was the case, and that they were powerless, now that the owners of the land had been declared by the Native Land Court, to influence them to sell if they were not willing to do so. They, however, promised to use their influence where it was powerful amongst their own relatives in inducing them to sign the Government deeds; and also with a view to do away with the stigma and public condemnation that in the past had been passed upon those who were known to have sold land. This clearly shows that the Native Land Court, in doing away with the old Maori title to land and substituting a European one for it, has almost entirely destroyed the influence that the chiefs formerly had over their people in the matter of the disposal of land. To use a homely phrase, "Jack is now as good as his master;" and the fact of the Native Land Court awarding a block of land to those who it considers to be the owners of it, be they few or numerous, means that each one of those owners has to be individually sought out, and his assent to the sale and his signature to the deed of conveyance obtained, he, at the same time, receiving the proportion of the purchase-money represented by his share. In cases where the owners of blocks of land are numbered by hundreds, it is easy to be seen that to acquire the whole or even a large number of the shares must take, under the most favourable circumstances, a considerable time. During the meeting the chiefs and leading half-castes showed a desire to assist Mr. Cadman in his endeavours to acquire land for settlement, and if the old style of land-purchase was in existence now, by which it was in the power of the principal chiefs to say what portion of their tribal lands should be disposed of, there would be no difficulty in the Government acquiring considerable areas at once. But, unfortunately, the saying that "the old order changeth" applies equally to land-purchase as to other Native matters; but, in the case of land-purchase, the change has brought about a more complicated and difficult system of acquiring land than prevailed in olden times.

Native Land Court in the King-country.

After an absence of more than twelve months, the Native Land Court opened here again on the 19th January last. After sitting here some weeks it adjourned to Kawhia, and from there to Kihikihi, and having disposed of the work that required doing at those places is now back again to Otorohanga, where it is likely to remain for some time, as there is abundance of work here for it to do. It is now presided over by Judge Gudgeon, who has with him, as assessor, a Tuhourangi Native, named Pirimi Mataiawhea. A considerable quantity of the work that this Court has done since it opened has been in connection with blocks that had been before a previous Court; but, although the owners had been declared by that Court, their interests were not defined, which left the title in such an unsatisfactory state that it was almost impossible, and certainly unsafe, for Government, or any other purchaser of Native land, to proceed until the proportionate ownership of each owner was defined. Until this was done the purchase could not safely proceed, and the acquirement of land for settlement was therefore retarded. To give an instance of the risk a purchaser runs in attempting to buy a block of land in which the interests of the owners have not been defined, I might cite the case of the Wharepuhunga Block, of 133,720 acres. The first Court that dealt with that block awarded it to 991 people, without defining the interests of any. The present Court (after a long investigation which would not have been required if the first Court had determined the interests) has declared that out of the 991 names in the original list of owners 37 had no right there at all, because they were either duplicate names or names of some who were already in the list under other names. Of the remaining 954 owners, the Court decided that the interest of 572 of them (or considerably more than half) was so small that they were only entitled to a quarter-share each; that 107 were entitled to a half-share each; that 27 were entitled to a three-quarter share each; and that only 247 were entitled to a full share each. Now, if there had been free trade in Native land within Rohepotae during the past two years, and if any private speculator or syndicate had commenced the purchase of the Wharepuhunga Block on the assumption that all the shares were equal (which they must either have done or let it alone), it is easy to see what a serious loss he or it would have suffered if they had bought out the majority of the owners whose interests were represented by quarter-shares only. The above is only one instance of what is the case in numerous blocks within Rohepotae, a large number of which require to have the interests of the owners defined before the purchase can be safely commenced. The Court now sitting here is doing some of this much-required work, and when it has had occasion to deal with new blocks, or subdivide old ones, where the interests of owners have not been already defined, it is defining them at once, thus leaving a clear and open track behind it in the shape of a well-defined title for those who follow after, be they Government or private speculators, who desire to purchase or lease Native land for the purpose of settlement.

Government Land-purchase in the King-country.

I believe it is the general impression amongst those of the public who are not acquainted with the laws affecting Native lands, and the dealings therewith, that all that is necessary to be done in

order to acquire Native lands is for Parliament to vote the money necessary for the purchase, and for the land-purchase agents to receive instructions to buy; when, by some process of legerdemain or supernatural agency, the Native owners of such land at once hand the same over to Government. If those people only knew the number of obstacles that have to be surmounted before a block of Native land is acquired, how surprised they would be. And to those who are sufficiently acquainted with dealings in Native land in other districts to know how difficult it is to get a number of Natives to dispose of their interests within a reasonable time, and at a reasonable price, it would surprise even them to be told that the difficulties that emanate solely from ourselves—that is, that are of our making, and for the existence of which the Natives cannot be charged or blamed at all—are more numerous and almost as formidable as those that emanate from the Natives themselves. I refer to the non-defining of interests of owners by the Court that investigates the original title to the block; the numerous errors that have been allowed to creep into the titles, which in some cases are of such a nature as to necessitate those blocks either being brought before the Court again to have the errors put right, or else a short Act of Parliament passed to validate them; also, the delay caused by the area of many of the blocks not being known, because they have not been surveyed yet.

Notwithstanding all the obstacles and drawbacks that the Government has had to contend with, I am able to report that the Crown has acquired by purchase, up to the 31st of last month (May), a gross area of 52,772 acres within the King-country. Of this area 24,719 acres are contained in six blocks, the purchase of which is complete, and 27,708 acres is contained within eighteen blocks at present under purchase. The acreage acquired within a number of the last-mentioned blocks is subject to a reduction of 10 per cent. for reserves that are to be returned to those Natives who have sold their interests, and in the case of four of those blocks the area acquired is estimated only, because the interests of the owners have not yet been defined by Court.

Since the last meeting that the Hon. Mr. Cadman had with the Natives here there has been a decided impetus given to land-purchase proceedings in the King-country, and I have every reason to believe that it will increase; and that, although it may be, for a time, of an intermittent nature, I am of opinion that we have now “turned the corner,” and that, so far as the Natives are concerned, the worst of our difficulties have been overcome.

The Acceptance of a Government Pension by King Tawhiao.

Though last in chronological order, but perhaps of greater importance than anything else that has taken place in Waikato during the past year, has been the acceptance of a Government pension by King Tawhiao. It is only those who are acquainted with Native matters that will understand what this really means; and even some of them may have erroneous ideas on the subject. It does not mean that the King movement is defunct, or has collapsed entirely, neither does it mean that we shall have no more trouble with Natives calling themselves the “King party;” but it means that the head of that party, the successor to Potatau, the first Maori king, and on behalf of whom the King movement, with all its subsequent shedding of Maori and pakeha blood, was originally inaugurated, has shown that he is dissatisfied with his present position of isolation and apparent antagonism to the Government and the law, and is desirous of more friendly relations. It does not mean that he has abdicated, or deserted his people and gone over to the other side, but merely that he is dissatisfied with things as they are at present, possibly because of the way in which some of his principal supporters have counselled or allowed acts that were in defiance of European law, and which might have brought about a conflict between the two races. (It is an open secret that many of the high-handed things that have lately been done with the connivance of Tawhiao’s runanga, or committee, were done without his knowledge or sanction.) Under these circumstances, and coupled with the fact that his recent visit to Auckland and meeting with the Hon. Mr. Cadman, to whom he took a personal liking, was exceedingly opportune, it can easily be understood that, after a lengthy conference with a Minister with whom, for the time being, he seemed to be completely in accord, he should accept the offer that was kindly and delicately put to him of a pension. It may be that he sees how, year by year, he and his people have been losing both numbers and power until, from being sought after and almost pressed to come to terms by Ministers in the past, they are now simply ignored altogether, unless any of them break the law, when they are promptly arrested and punished, he being powerless to help them. If it is true that thoughts of that kind influenced him in accepting a pension they were entirely spontaneous, for nothing of that nature was referred to during the meeting between himself and the Hon. the Native Minister; and the accepting by him of the pension was not made a condition that he would be required to do anything derogatory to his great rank as a chief and head of his people.

The King party, however—that is, the chiefs who conduct the affairs of the King movement—are greatly incensed at Tawhiao having accepted a pension from the Government. In fact, some of them stoutly deny that he has done so, and for the sake of the cause they will, I have no doubt, do their utmost to bring about a misunderstanding between him and the Government, in order that he may be induced by them to give up his pension. It remains to be seen whether they will be successful. If they are not, then the real meaning of the accepting of a pension by Tawhiao will be seen.

I have, &c.,

GEO. T. WILKINSON,

Government Native Agent and Land-purchase Officer.

The Acting Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

No. 4.

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

SIR,—

New Plymouth, 8th June, 1892.

In reply to your letter of 26th May last, I have the honour to state that I am not aware of any matter of special consequence that has taken place amongst the Natives of my district during this last year.

They are cultivating quietly, in much about the usual manner, on the different lands reserved for them along the coast.

I notice that in the southern end of my district, say from Manutahi to Waitotara, a move amongst the Natives towards a general return to the Christian religion has taken place, several substantial wooden churches having been built in different places, and the drinking habits of the Natives have, as a consequence, very much decreased during the last year or two. This is, I think, to be attributed to the personal influence of those clergymen who have devoted their energies specially to this subject in that district.

Education is neglected by the Natives to a great extent, about forty of their children attending school in the Taranaki educational district, and under twenty in the Wanganui educational district north of Waitotara, or a total of sixty Native and half-caste children attending school between White Cliffs and Waitotara; but even this is an improvement on what it was a few years ago.

The health of the Natives has been much about the average during the last year. In places a number of the old people have died off, but generally there has been no severe sickness or mortality.

I am told, as a curious fact, by a gentleman well acquainted with the district surrounding Parihaka, that at a Native village called Puniho, where about forty Natives reside, more Native children have been born during the last year or two than for a long time previously, and he attributes it to the more regular, steady habits adopted by these Natives.

As a rule, however, my opinion has not altered from that given in previous years, that the Native race is decreasing from high mortality and low birth-rate—this being so far as my own observation goes.

I have, &c.,

W. RENNELL,

The Acting Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

Reserves Trustee.

No. 5.

Mr. A. TURNBULL, R.M., Napier, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Resident Magistrate's Office, Napier, 14th June, 1892.

As requested by your Circular No. 7, of 27th May, 1892, I have now the honour to report as follows on the state of the Natives in the Napier district:—

The Natives still continue peaceable, there having been no disturbance between themselves during the past year, although in June last a disturbance was feared in connection with the long-pending Omahu dispute. One of the parties, however, applied to the Supreme Court at that time to restrain the other from assuming undisputed right over the land in dispute, when an order was made restraining all parties from asserting any rights of ownership over the land until the application for a rehearing was heard. Such application came on at Hastings before the Chief Judge and Pepene Eketore, Native Assessor, in October last, and a rehearing was granted on the 15th December, 1891. The rehearing took place during the months of March and April last, and a final decision was given by the Chief Judge and Judge Scannell on the 5th ultimo.

In addition to the sittings at Hastings, the Native Land Court has also sat almost continuously at Waipawa and Danevirke during the past year, adjudicating on the Waikopiro, Mangatoro, Rakautatahi, and Ngapaeruru Blocks.

Negotiations have been entered into by the Government for the purchase of the Waikopiro Blocks, and up to the present time about twenty interests have been purchased. These negotiations have been carried on by Mr. Kelly, the Assistant Land-purchase Officer, also Native Interpreter, attached to this office, and, so far as I can judge, have been fairly successful.

The general state of health among the Natives continues good, and calls for no special remark. The only death of any note amongst them happened lately, namely, that of the loyal old chief Paora Kaiwhata, who, I am informed, was one of the friendly chiefs, and rendered the Government much assistance during the war. His funeral took place on the 27th ultimo, at Moteo, at which Mr. Kelly was present to represent the Native Department.

In the Trust Commissioners' Court there have been 144 transactions inquired into under "The Native Lands Frauds' Prevention Act, 1881," and its amendments, and in most instances I have examined the Natives interested personally. These examinations have taken place at Napier and Waipawa, and also at other places, when engaged on my magisterial duties, though in a few cases I have made special visits for the purpose. I may here state that I have endeavoured, as far as practicable, to get all deeds executed and the matter completed in my presence, so that I may have a better opportunity of inquiring into and judging as to the *bona fides* of the transactions. I understand that this course gives satisfaction to the parties interested, and at the same time saves the expense of bringing the Natives again to town when the hearing of the application for a certificate comes on.

The Natives at the various settlements continue to cultivate and farm as usual, and have had fairly good crops this season, but I have been unable to get any details as to the kind or amount of

crops grown, neither have I been able to ascertain the quantity of wool produced from Native flocks.

There have been no charges of a serious character against Natives in this district during the past year, and the number of convictions for minor offences appears to be somewhat slightly below that for the previous one.

As this is my first year in charge of this district I am not in a position to say whether the general state of the Natives has improved or otherwise. To myself, as a new comer, the Natives appear to be rather improvident, taking little thought for the future, and waste much of their time and means in attending at Native Land Courts prosecuting claims to some block or other in which their interest, if any, may be of little value. In examining them as Trust Commissioner, the Natives often give as a reason for disposing of their lands that they require money to prosecute such claims, which I understand, in many instances, they simply bring forward on the chance of getting their names placed on the list of owners, no matter how small the share they expect to acquire may be, or however incommensurate with the time and expense spent over the matter.

I have, &c.,

A. TURNBULL,

Resident Magistrate.

The Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

No. 6.

Mr. J. BOOTH, R.M., Gisborne, to the ACTING UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Gisborne, 11th July, 1892.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of number and date as per margin, directing me to furnish the usual annual report on the state of the Natives in this district for presentation to Parliament.

I regret that, owing to several weeks' absence from Gisborne on Resident Magistrate and Native Land Court duty, the sending of the report has been delayed.

I have the honour to state that since sending in my last yearly report everything has been going on as usual in the district. The crops throughout the district have been good, and now that so much bush-land has been taken up all who can and will work have constant employment, taking large bush-falling contracts in winter, and in summer shearing, and cutting and saving grass-seed. A considerable number of Natives are now owners of flocks of sheep, and are doing well; indeed, the great majority in the district are very well off; they dress well, and in the neighbourhood of Gisborne most of them drive their own buggies.

It is much to be regretted that, although most if not all of them could, if they would, afford to build comfortable weather-board houses, they prefer as a rule to live after the style of their fathers—the floors of the dwelling- and sleeping-houses being on a level with and sometimes lower than the ground outside. They sleep on mats or mattresses spread on the ground. In former times, when life and property were not safe in New Zealand, they were obliged of necessity to live in fortified pas, and living in this kind of building did not much matter, as the pas were necessarily built on high ground, and drainage thereby secured; but now that life and property are safe in every part of the country they prefer to live on the low, rich, and often swampy soil, to be near their cultivations. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that under these conditions the dwellings above described become hot-beds of typhoid fever, influenza, &c.

I am sorry to say that the past year has been very fatal to a great number of old people and young children. I am glad, however, to add that a doctor (Dr. Grant) subsidised by the Government has now taken up his residence on the East Coast, his head-quarters being at Waipiro. When I was up the coast a fortnight ago I was told by the Natives that he had been very successful in his treatment of several cases which were looked upon as being past hope. This will, I think, tend to make him popular, and perhaps induce the foolish people in cases of serious illness to apply to the doctor instead of going to their so-called Maori doctors, who kill more than they cure.

Some of the schools, owing to so much sickness, have had to be closed for a time; in two or more instances the European masters and members of their families have been laid up with fever, but none of the Europeans who have taken the proper remedies have died. The masters are most of them supplied by the Government with proper fever remedies, and these are administered where Natives will receive them; but it is most difficult to enforce a proper diet. A child, a week or two ago, who had been treated by one of the masters was recovering from fever; she cried for some of the food her parents were eating (pork and potatoes); they gave her some, although proper milk-diet had been supplied by the master: the next day she was dead. She was a bright little school-girl. The progress of the children in the schools has, I believe, been satisfactory.

The opening of a Board school at Awanui has to a certain extent interfered with the attendance at the Wai o Matatini school, three miles away, as all the European and half-caste children from Awanui, and several Native children from the immediate neighbourhood, now attend the Board school. Where there has been little or no fever the attendance at the schools has been up to the average.

I am pleased to say that the Natives on this coast, as a whole, have almost entirely given up drinking: it is very rarely now that a Native is brought up on a charge of drunkenness.

During the year ended 31st March I have held Resident Magistrate's Courts quarterly at Awanui and Tologa Bay, and every two months at Wairoa. Besides the ordinary Resident Magistrate's Court work at Gisborne, a Trust Commissioner's Court is held every Monday when I am not absent. I have also held Native Land Courts at Gisborne whenever I could spare time from other work. These Courts have been generally held for the purpose of hearing and disposing of succession claims.

During the year, 328 succession orders were made, 87 orders for trustees, and 8 orders for probate.

During the last fortnight over 100 succession claims have been dealt with by me at Waipiro and Tuparoa.

The cases dealt with in the Trust Commissioner's Court up to the 31st March were 202.

The criminal cases heard against Maoris in Gisborne for the year were 57: at Wairoa, 19; at Awanui and Waipiro, 52; at Tologa Bay, 7.

Civil cases: Gisborne—European *v.* Maori, 69; Maori *v.* European, *nil*; Maori *v.* Maori, 2. Wairoa—European *v.* Maori, 51; Maori *v.* European, 6; Maori *v.* Maori, 5. Awanui—European *v.* Maori, 62; Maori *v.* European, 7; Maori *v.* Maori, 25. Tologa Bay—European *v.* Maori, 7; Maori *v.* European, 2; Maori *v.* Maori, 4.

Native Land Courts were held during the year at Gisborne, Tologa Bay, and Wai o Matatini, by Judges Barton, Gudgeon, and Scannell.

I have, &c.

J. BOOTH,

Resident Magistrate.

The Acting Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

No. 7.

Captain PREECE, R.M., N.Z.C., Kaiapoi, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Resident Magistrate's Office, Kaiapoi, 8th July, 1892.

In compliance with the request contained in your circular of the 26th of May, No. 7, I have the honour to forward the following report on the state of the Natives in the districts under my charge.

I am unable to give a full report of the state of the Natives owing to the fact that my duties have not brought me more in contact with them.

The Natives of Kaiapoi, Little River, and Akaroa maintained fairly good health during the year. The only chief of note who died this year was Irai Tihau, of Little River, a man of influence, and very much respected.

The Natives generally complain of the small area of land held by them as reserves. I am unable to state whether they have grounds for these complaints or not, but they at any rate appear to lease portions of these lands at good rentals.

I have visited the Native school at Akaroa several times and found a fair attendance on each occasion. I have had no opportunity of visiting the schools at Little River. I was present at the breaking-up of the Kaiapoi school, when an address was presented to His Excellency Lord Onslow by the pupils.

A sitting of the Native Land Court was held by the Chief Judge at the Kaiapoi Native meeting-house in the latter part of the year for the purpose of disposing of applications for rehearings, and I held a sitting at the Resident Magistrate's Court as Recorder in February for the purpose of hearing applications for probate of Native wills. Several cases were heard. I understand that there are a number of applications for succession orders pending at Kaiapoi, also at Waikouaiti.

The Natives seem to be remarkably sober; they take great interest in European sports, and were, I understand, successful in carrying off the prizes in the international tug-of-war both at Christchurch and Dunedin. I believe they display the utmost good humour on these occasions whether successful or otherwise.

I have, &c.,

GEORGE PREECE,

Resident Magistrate.

The Acting Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

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