

definite in regard to minors where no register of births, deaths, or marriages exists; and amongst a people entirely, up to within a very short period, ignorant of dates, it is next to impossible to state the age of any person, the usual way of arriving at the date of a person's birth or death being that so-and-so arrived at a certain place; or such an event happened either at that period or a little before, or a little after. It should be imperative in the case of minors that their ages should be specified at the time of the land passing the Court, and if copies of the registers in possession of missionaries, &c., could be deposited, say, at the offices of the Judges of Native Land Courts and Registrars' offices, one step would be gained towards the settlement of this troubled question. Great inconveniences have arisen through the number of persons inserted in memorials of ownership under "The Native Lands Act, 1873"—in some cases over 300 names. This is a most unfair arrangement also for the Maoris, for the chief and large landowner is in no better position than the man whose only right to the land was his being a member of the tribe, and, as such, having a right to cultivate sufficient for his own use; supplying, also, the chief with a portion of the produce for his own use and for the tribe. Into the legal questions that have arisen out of past transactions in Maori lands it is not for me to enter here, were I capable of so doing, but I would draw attention to the growing desire amongst the Maoris for the subdivision and individualizing of their lands, and the necessity of simplifying the machinery for carrying out this work. I have referred to the present working of the Native Land Act in my report on land purchase, East Coast.

The schools at Pakowhai and Omahu, I am sorry to say, have not succeeded so well of late; the former is closed, and attendance at the latter is small. A schoolhouse has been erected at Taupo. The school at Wairoa appears to be fairly attended; but both those at Poverty Bay are closed. The school at Tolaga Bay, and those in the Ngatiporou district, are generally doing well, more particularly those at Akuaku and Wai-o-matatini. Too much stress cannot be laid on the importance of continuing the education of the rising generation of Maoris in the English language. To carry the work out successfully, careful inspection and an uniform system are required. Many of the small schools that have been opened will not succeed, through the population in the neighbourhood not being sufficient to maintain them, or through its being a migratory one; or again, through the want of influential persons, either Europeans or Maoris, in the locality, who take an interest in the matter. As far as my own observation goes, greater success would probably be attained if four or more good schools in this island were established, which should be well supported, sufficiently so to take the children from their homes and have them entirely maintained at these institutions, and carefully looked after. I have observed in some cases that too much anxiety is shown to push the children on, for the sake of show: commencing, as it were, at the last page of the book first, instead of thoroughly instilling the first rudiments. For instance, I have heard Maori children repeating long pieces of poetry, in English, without understanding anything of what they had been saying, or even the meaning of the most simple tale in the first pages of the lesson-book out of which they learnt; also answering, like parrots, difficult questions in arithmetic, geography, &c. This, fortunately, is not the rule, but it shows the great necessity of careful inspection and care in selecting teachers. Another important point is the education of the girls—more particularly in plain sewing, cooking, and cleanliness. It must also be remembered that thorough success cannot be obtained right off, nor in a generation.

A large extent of land is being acquired from the Maoris of the East Coast—more particularly in the County of Cook—by the Government, which, when properly opened up, will tend greatly to the developing of the resources of that country, more especially so if dray roads be made inland from Poverty Bay to Wairoa, and from Poverty Bay to Waiapu. The sooner the bulk of the waste land now lying idle passes hands in some form the better. If, then, the reserves retained by the Maoris in the several blocks of land purchased were placed under some system—under the Native Reserves Act or otherwise—so as to prevent their being at once sold or mortgaged or leased for a long period without discretion, thus leaving the Natives quietly and permanently settled on these lands with Europeans around them, they would learn by force of example the benefit accruing from steady industry, and, not being any longer unnaturally excited by land-selling, &c., or living a useless, squandering life on the proceeds of these sales, &c., they would, if ever they are to rise in the scale of civilization, have a fair chance. I have not seen much of the Urewera tribe during the past year, as the natural outlet to their country is Ohiwa and Opotiki; but, from constant correspondence, I am aware of their desire to continue in the quiet state they have been in for some years past. I would suggest that every encouragement should be given them to open up their country by roads. The road called the Tarapounamu, by way of Ahikereru, is stated to be a practicable line. The late visit of the Hon. Dr. Pollen, as Native Minister, to Taupo, and his meeting with Rewi Maniapoto and other leading chiefs of the King party there, is likely to facilitate the maintenance of our friendly relations with the Maoris of the interior. The opening of the Native Land Court in that district, which, I hear, is to take place soon, will tend greatly towards the quiet settlement of the many land disputes existing there, and enable the preliminary land purchase negotiations in the district to be completed. The opening of a dray road from Taupo to Cambridge, and from Taupo to Wanganui, would be a great boon to the district. I would repeat what I stated in a former report in regard to the Hot Springs, that a careful analysis of all the springs should be made, and a report—giving full descriptions—with a plan of the district, showing the position of each, published in pamphlet form, and well circulated. The Natives of Patea continue, as they have always been, a