

The Native expenditure will shortly be further reduced here by the decease of several of the old chiefs, who cannot, in the course of nature, be expected to survive much longer; and, though it would be unnatural to wish their speedy removal from earth on the score of economy, yet it will hereafter be consolatory to know that in their last days they continued to enjoy the favour and support of a paternal Government.

The restrictions as to supply to Natives of ammunition for sporting purposes, and which have been strictly enforced here of late, do not seem to have borne hardly on the Maori population, judging from the few complaints and remonstrances made, the Natives well understanding the reason actuating the Government in this matter. Two months of the sporting season have nearly passed, and I have ventured to recommend but two or three chiefs for the indulgence. The repair and sale of arms has likewise been kept under severe restriction, and the law relaxed in very few cases, and upon strong recommendation and cause shown. The necessity for keeping up the restriction lies more in the danger (were the same relaxed) of the Maoris procuring large quantities of ammunition, which would make them more ready to settle some of their land quarrels by a resort to arms than they otherwise would. The likelihood of their picking a quarrel with us is more remote, although in that case the danger would be increased could they get a ready and abundant supply of arms and ammunition.

I might here mention the fact that an obstruction to the free navigation of the Wanganui River exists, in the shape of a blockade against European travellers, at a place called Puketapu, about one hundred miles from town, at the mouth of the Taangarakau, an affluent of the Wanganui, and where there are extensive coal-beds. The object of such embargo is to prevent the exploration of the country by gold-prospectors, and as a check to the sale of land. The prime movers are Hoani Pehi and Te Hai—the latter a most obstinate and pig-headed fellow, who turned me back once, because I had some European gentlemen with me who were taking a holiday and desirous of seeing and admiring the magnificent forest scenery of the Upper Wanganui District. The Tribes Ngatiruru and others in the neighbourhood are parties to this obstruction, and, if they persist in their unfriendly and short-sighted policy, they deserve to be made to suffer, by being forbidden an approach to town to sell their produce and purchase European commodities. Only quite lately the said Te Hai turned back a European carpenter, who was being taken up to the Tuhua country by one of Mamaku's Natives to build a house for him, deprived him of his tools, and coolly wrote to me to pay the Natives who brought him down £5.

Hoping that this report may meet with the approval of the Hon. the Native Minister,

The Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

RICHARD W. WOON, R.M.

No. 18.

Major BROWN, Civil Commissioner, New Plymouth, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

New Plymouth, 18th May, 1880.

My annual report upon the state of the Natives of my district is, from the circumstances of the case, very brief.

The influence of Te Whiti over the Natives in the interests of peace, and, as he conceives, in their own interests, has continued to increase, and he has brought many Natives within his influence who were only half-hearted twelve months back. It appears to me that he is at the pinnacle of his power over the mind of the Natives from the White Cliffs to the Patea River inclusive; and that any day, or monthly meeting, may see the collapse of Te Whiti and his influence.

The course of action he still counsels, to be opposed to the carrying-out of the confiscation, is one of obstructiveness, unaccompanied by violence, and that may avoid any serious results to the Natives, so far as he can see. He is, I believe, guided to some extent by information and advice from his leading countrymen and their advisers in Wellington. But, as he will not submit to be entirely guided by it, it is not at all unlikely that he may direct steps to be taken that may land him and his people in breaches of the law, for which they will be held responsible.

He still exercises his influence to prevent any recourse to arms; but it is of course possible now, as it always is, that some Native may, on personal or tribal grounds, take vengeance on a European; the peculiar difficulty at the present time being that Te Whiti, as in the case of Hiroki, would feel obliged to afford protection to the murderer, to secure his own position and influence with the Natives. At the same time, there is an atmosphere of stagnation pervading Te Whiti's people, no doubt very much influenced by the removal of so many able-bodied men as prisoners to the Middle Island, and whose absence is visibly obvious in many ways, and at the present time is a great guarantee of inaction as regards any violent course being adopted. There has been a heavy mortality in the past twelve months, and, including the previous twelve months, I estimate the decrease in the number of Natives in my district since the census of 1878 will reduce the number of men, women, and children from 3,440 to under 3,000.

I have, &c.,

CHARLES BROWN,

Civil Commissioner.

The Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

No. 19.

The Rev. J. W. STACK to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department.

Report on the Canterbury Maoris from 1879 to 1880.

I HAVE very little to add to what I have already reported regarding the condition of the Natives in this district. Their social and moral condition is, if anything, slightly improved. The young men seem to be taking more kindly to regular employment; and the increased rental received for lands let to Europeans has improved the condition of those who derive all their means of subsistence from