

ness amongst them has, as a matter of course, caused a decrease in crime; so much so, that during the past year only two convictions in criminal cases have been recorded at the Resident Magistrate's Court at the Thames.

*Disposition towards Europeans.*—The disposition of the Hauraki Natives towards Europeans is, so far as the loyal Ngatimarū and Ngatipaoa are concerned, all that could be desired; and the same can be said of Ngatiwhanaunga at Coromandel, and a portion of the Ngatitamatera, who reside at Ohinemuri and Cabbage Bay, they having done nothing to forfeit the good name that they have now borne for a number of years. But the same cannot be said of the Ngatihako Tribe, who reside principally on the banks of the Waihou and Piako Rivers. These people, in olden times, were the owners of nearly all the land in the Ohinemuri District; but, unfortunately, their rank and possessions did not give them immunity from the attacks of their enemies, and they have, therefore, through successive defeats (long before the advent of Europeans), had to succumb to the stronger arms and overwhelming numbers of their adversaries. But although defeated, they were not entirely dispossessed of their territory; and this fact, coupled with their having intermarried with their conquerors, causes them at the present time to take up a social position that they are not entitled to assume, and which is continually being resented by the Ngatitamatera Tribe, who are the present owners of the land originally owned by Ngatihako. Their claims to land are, with few exceptions, successfully opposed in Native Land Courts by Ngatitamatera, and this has caused them to assume a morose and apparently unfriendly attitude to everybody, and especially to the Pakeha. I do not mean that it is to be inferred these people are in the habit of molesting Europeans on any pretence whatever; but their having to take up a subservient position amongst other tribes in this district—they who were formerly lords and masters of the whole country—is particularly galling to them, and has caused them to eschew not only the Pakeha, but also those Natives who, through having plenty of land to dispose of, are on good terms with their European neighbours; and, as might be expected of a dissatisfied people, they have fully adopted all the laws and doctrines (religious or otherwise) of king Tawhiao, especially as regards opposition to roads, telegraphs, surveys, and leasing or selling of land, and even to the removing of the snags in the Waihou River, near their settlement, which are at present an obstacle to navigation. They seem to have chosen for themselves a policy of sullen opposition to anything that would further the advancement of the district from a European point of view and are ready at any time to resent by force, if necessary, any encroachment (whether by Natives or Europeans) upon their self-adopted laws and regulations—instance the shooting at and wounding one of the party engaged in surveying the Pukehange Block, in August, 1879, merely on the pretext that false boundaries had been given by the Natives who sold the Pukehange Block to the Government, and, therefore, a portion of their land adjoining was being wrongfully included in the survey—a mere question of dispute which could easily have been settled when the case was brought before the Native Land Court. They have, also, since ordered off with threats Europeans who were sent to remove snags from out of the Waihou River. Notwithstanding these bad traits in their character, which, I consider, it behoves me to mention in a report of this kind, they are, if left entirely alone, an unoffending people, and, on account of the rigidity with which they carry out their kingite and semi-religious principles, are seldom found offending against our laws, however trivial may be the offence: and I must say that, during the few days when they were much exercised in mind through one of their relatives being foully murdered at Te Aroha, in February last, their principal chiefs—notably Pineaha te Wharekowhai, and Hoera te Mimiha, of Ngatikoi—behaved remarkably well all through the trying time, and were the first to accede to my request to leave the matter for the law to decide, and it was mainly through their influence and exertions that some of the more turbulent spirits were restrained from taking immediate revenge upon one or two Europeans who were suspected by them of being guilty of the outrage. Action of this sort, which shows that, by allowing the matter to be decided by our laws, they have no wish to pick a quarrel with us, is, I think, deserving of praise, and should go a great way towards softening any hard feelings that we may have harboured against them on account of their persistent opposition to our progressive and go-a-head policy, whenever the same has been brought into contact with themselves, or sought to be carried out on land over which they have control.

I will now briefly mention some of the principal events that have occurred in this district during the last twelve months, and which are likely to influence the Native mind in a greater or less degree.

The first event worthy of note was the sitting of the Native Land Court at Paeroa, Ohinemuri, in June and July last, during which sitting the Native title to the Ohinemuri Gold Field Block was decided. This hearing alone occupied some five weeks, and representatives from nearly all the tribes within the Hauraki District, from Cape Colville on the north to Te Aroha on the south, were present. The weather during this time was very bleak and cold, and two Natives died before the Court was over, the cause of their death not being, as represented by the Press, through want brought on by the Government refusing to grant supplies of food to the Natives attending Court, but through sickness brought about by the inclemency of the weather, and which they, both being old people, were not able to withstand. It was well known before the Court sat that a large portion of the freehold of the Ohinemuri Gold Fields Block of 100,000 acres had already been purchased by the Crown, but as such purchase (perfectly legal because of its being on behalf of the Crown) was completed before the Native ownership to the block was decided, the Natives showed their cuteness, if not to say dishonesty, in using their utmost endeavours to prove to the Court that those who had previously sold to the Crown had little or no claim to the block; in fact, ignoring altogether some who were known to be large owners. Fortunately, however, their action was exposed and defeated; so, having failed to embarrass the Government so much as they had hoped in that way, they retaliated by crowding, whenever opportunity offered, the Crown grants of the different blocks with the names of their children, allowing themselves to stand on one side, the result being that there are now about sixty shares in the block held by minors, who cannot sell or dispose of the same in any way whatever, without first going through a great deal of legal form and ceremony, which, if carried out in its entirety, makes the purchase of a minor's share in land almost prohibitive. The Court sat for about two months; and although disputes waxed hot, both within Court and out, the services of the police were rarely