

of their having commenced to put their lands through the Native Land Court, and the fact of public works being in full swing throughout it, about which they wanted some information and explanation: in fact, the result of their having adopted civilization. Matters connected with Native schools were also referred to, as were others about which they were in trouble or doubt. Wahanui, Taonui, and Rewi were all present (the latter having accompanied the Hon. the Native Minister from Te Awamutu); but Mr. John Ormsby (half-caste, and Chairman of Native Committee) acted, as on former occasions, as spokesman at the meeting. In the course of his address he assured the Native Minister that the Natives had fully made up their minds to make further use of the Native Land Court for the purpose of subdividing the large Rohe-potae (or King-country) Block, so that portions of it can be thrown open for settlement. After the public meeting was over the Hon. Mr. Ballance received several deputations from Natives who had personal and other matters that they wished to lay before him, and they all seemed pleased at his having gone to see them, and at the patient way in which he listened to what they had to say. He returned to Te Awamutu by train that evening, and went on from there to Kihikihi.

*Prohibition of Intoxicating Drink in the King-country.*—Notwithstanding the fact that no licenses to sell alcoholic liquor are allowed to be granted within the King-country that has not, unfortunately, been the means, as it was hoped it would be, of keeping intoxicating drink out of the district. Means have been found to introduce it; and, strange as it may seem, the first people whom the police found it necessary to take action against for selling spirits without a license were the Natives. To Europeans and others who are not acquainted with the Natives of this district it may seem strange that, after the speeches and efforts of Chiefs Wahanui, Rewi, Taonui, and of Messrs. J. and A. Ormsby to bring about the exclusion of drink from the King-country, the Natives themselves should be the first aggressors, and it is only just to the former and the immediate people that they represent to say that the aggressors, though belonging to the Ngatimaniapoto Tribe, are not always in "sympathetic accord" with Wahanui and other chiefs with regard to all their actions. They belong to the section of Ngatimaniapoto called Tekau-ma-rua, who some years ago identified themselves with Te Whiti and his doctrines, and who, with more or less wavering, have remained his disciples ever since. Their position, therefore, through being on a different religious and political platform, has made them in a way antagonistic and obstructive to the other portion of their tribe, and has caused them occasionally to be a source of considerable trouble in the district. When Wahanui and others were willing that a line of railway should be surveyed through the country they stopped it and tied up the surveyors. This and other actions of theirs has shown that their policy is to play at cross-purposes with the rest of the tribe. When they found, therefore, that Wahanui and others wanted to keep drink out of the country it was quite in keeping with the policy of the Tekau-ma-rua to decide that it was necessary for them to be the means of introducing it. As soon as they saw that the large influx of European navvies and others created a demand for it they started a miniature publichouse in a Maori whare at their settlement called Te Kumi, and unblushingly sold whisky and brandy to those who were willing to pay for it. As, however, they did not make any distinction with regard to their purchasers, they soon fell victims to the police, who instituted proceedings against them, and they were tried and fined for sly grog-selling. They appear to have profited by the lesson that has been taught them, and have, I believe, given the practice up. I do not think their desire was so much to break a European law as to act in opposition to Wahanui and other chiefs, who, so far, have taken the entire management of matters pertaining to the King-country in their hands.

But, though the Maori sly grog-selling has been stopped, the Europeans, who are less simple and unsophisticated in matters of that sort than are their Maori brethren, manage to carry it on with impunity and, I presume, with profit. They, however, do not commit such indiscretions as selling bottles or glasses of whisky to all and sundry, in the way the Maoris did, but they dispense their intoxicants under the guise of hop-beer. This has now been going on for a long time, and, although it is possible that the first instalment of hop-beer introduced into the district might have been a genuine teetotal drink, it very soon became apparent that the compounds subsequently introduced were of a different nature. The police therefore decided to take action, and samples were seized and sent to Auckland to be analysed, the result of which, I am informed, is that they contain more ingredients than should be found in temperance beverages, and proceedings have therefore been taken against the vendors.

The Native Land Court, which had adjourned from Otorohanga in November last to the 3rd March, opened on that date at Alexandra. It was thought that the Court's first work would be to finally settle the list of names for the large Rohepotae (or King-country) Block, and then proceed with the subdivision of the same; but it was found that the Ngatimaniapoto were not ready, so the investigation of the title to a block of land of some 8,000 acres at Aotea (between Raglan and Kawhia) called Manuaitu was commenced, and is now being dealt with. It is expected that judgment will be given in a few days, as the evidence in the case is all concluded. After which, if Ngatimaniapoto are ready, the Court will most likely adjourn to Otorohanga, to go on with the subdivision of the Rohe-potae Block. The Judge of the Court is Major Mair, and the Assessor, Paratene Ngata, of the Ngatiporou Tribe, who both gave such satisfaction during the first hearing of the Rohe-potae Block that the Ngatimaniapoto requested that they should also take the subdivision of the same.

*Troubles and Disputes with Natives.*—It is quite a natural consequence that, with the opening of the King-country and the introduction of public works therein, with the necessary influx of Europeans to carry them out, a number of disputes should occur between the latter and the Natives. Disputes have occurred in several cases, and in two instances the works have been temporarily stopped until they were adjusted—in one case the Europeans and Natives actually came to blows. But it can hardly be said that the Natives were to blame in the matter. They have always shown themselves amenable to reason, and desirous, if possible, not to commit a breach of the peace; at the same time being determined to stand up for their rights and not to be