

SESS. II.—1891.
NEW ZEALAND.

REPORTS FROM OFFICERS IN NATIVE DISTRICTS.

[In continuation of G.—2, 1890.]

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

No. 1.

The UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department, to OFFICERS in NATIVE DISTRICTS.

SIR,—

Native Office, Wellington, 12th May, 1891.

I have the honour, by direction of the Hon. Mr. Cadman, to request you will be good enough to furnish at your earliest convenience, but not later than the 8th proximo, the usual annual report on the state of the Natives in your districts, for presentation to Parliament.

I have, &c.,

T. W. LEWIS, Under-Secretary.

No. 2.

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

SIR,—

Auckland, 10th June, 1891.

In compliance with the request conveyed in your Circular No. 1, of the 8th May, 1891, I have now the honour to submit my usual annual report on the state of the Natives in my district, for presentation to Parliament.

It may be well to state that the district comprises the Counties of Mangonui, Whangaroa, Hokianga, Bay of Islands, Whangarei, Hobson, Rodney, Otamatea, and Waitemata, and that the total Native population therein is 8,793, according to the figures of the recent census.

The health of the people during the past year has been wonderfully good. The mortality has certainly been below the average of late years. The only Natives of any note who have passed away are Hirini Taiwhanga and Maihi te Huhu: of the first it is not necessary to say anything; but of the latter I may state that he had been a Native Assessor for many years, and had at all times been a ready and able help to the side of law and order. He had considerable influence with the Rarawa Tribe residing in the neighbourhood of Ahipara. He was one of the "old school," the representatives of which are rapidly disappearing.

I regret to say that I cannot see any improvement in the social habits of the Maoris. Those who adopt a better class of house and living are the exceptions to the rule, and example seems to go but a very little way in this direction. Laziness and want of thrift are the curse of the Maori. They still only cultivate barely sufficient land to provide food for their immediate wants, and, when any extra effort is made, it is only in anticipation of some big political gathering in the locality, when there is likely to be a large attendance of people and a proportionate consumption of food. They lack the main incentive to downright industry, *i.e.*, poverty, for they can always command a fair amount of money by spasmodic gum-digging. Kauri-gum affords an apparently inexhaustible mine of wealth. Not only does almost the whole Native population of the north rely upon it as a means of subsistence, but a very large percentage of the Europeans also. At present there is little apparent decrease in its production. It will be a bad day for the Natives when they can no longer rely upon this very profitable industry.

The district has been remarkably free from crime of a serious nature, and when the number of Natives is considered it must be admitted that our Court records show a very clean sheet.

In some localities the people are remarkably sober, but in others there is great room for improvement. From the north side of the Whangaroa Harbour, right away to the North Cape, and in many settlements on the Hokianga River, there is exemplary sobriety, but on the south side, and notably at Whangaroa, Kaeo, and Kaihu, there is an immense amount of drunkenness, and consequent demoralisation.

The Native schools still flourish, and continue to carry on their work of civilisation. The profitable results may not be apparent to the casual observer, but those intimately connected with Natives are well aware of them, and see them cropping out in many directions.

I have, &c.,

The Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

H. W. BISHOP, R.M.