

After the meeting had adjourned to Maungakawa, the Natives assembled there employed themselves in discussing the cause of the fighting between Maoris and Europeans at Waitara and Waikato in 1860 and 1863, and expressed a desire that an inquiry should be made into the matter by some independent tribunal, as, according to their view, the Europeans, and not they, are to blame for all the troubles that have taken place between the two races.

Native Schools.

One of the five Native schools, for which I am District Superintendent—namely, the one at Kopua, has been closed during the past year because of the paucity of attendance. The others manage to keep up the average attendance fairly well; but the parents do not appreciate as much as they should do the generosity and forethought of the Government in providing schools for the special benefit of their children, and, in return therefore, see that the children attend them more regularly.

Religion.

The Church of England and Wesleyan bodies, noting, most likely, the success which is attending the labours of the Mormons amongst the Maoris in the Thames and Waikato districts, are now re-entering the missionary field, which has been deserted by them for thirty years. The old Wesleyan Mission station at Kopua is to be occupied by a Maori minister, and the Rev. Mr. Gittos, of the Wesleyan Church, is to be stationed at Te Awamutu, near by, for the purpose of watching over and fostering the cause.

On behalf of the Church of England the Ven. Archdeacon Clarke, accompanied by a Native teacher, has been in the habit of making periodical visits to Otorohanga during the past year, and holding religious services amongst the Natives, that is, amongst the few who attend them.

Since, however the falling-away of the Natives from the Christian religion, just before the commencement of the Waikato war, in 1863, the only experience they have had of a so-called religious nature has been their connection with the many forms of Hauhauism, Te Whiti-ism, Te Kooti-ism, and the numerous other faiths that have been introduced amongst them, all of which partook, more or less, of fanatical actions, unintelligible sayings, and unhealthy excitement. To substitute these for the more quiet and subdued actions and influences of the Christian religion will not, I think, find much favour with the Maoris at first, to say nothing of the prejudice that the Waikato Natives profess to have against missionaries. Maoris like to have something novel and exciting even in their religion, and I am inclined to think that the Salvation Army tactics would find more favour in their eyes than would any other, more especially if the songs were translated and sung in Maori.

Whatever means, however, are taken to win the Maoris back to Christianity deserve support and success. It would indeed be a pleasant sight to see churches once more erected throughout this district, and the Natives regular in their attendance at them.

No. 4.

R. S. BUSH, Esq., R.M., Tauranga, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Resident Magistrate's Office, Tauranga, 4th June, 1891.

In reply to your circular-letter, I have the honour to furnish the usual annual report on the Natives resident within my magisterial district, which comprises the Counties of Tauranga, Rotorua, Whakatane, East Taupo, and a part of West Taupo. The Native population in these counties number close upon nine thousand, but those shown in my return of the recent census only include 69 from East Taupo, as the Counties of East and West Taupo were, for census purposes, allotted to another officer.

The conduct of the Natives throughout the districts under my charge has been exceptionally good and orderly; very few Natives, indeed, in this vast area, have been punished for drunkenness and other disorderly offences, during the past year, probably not more than twenty. Two or three Natives from Rotorua have been sentenced to short terms of imprisonment for petty thefts and for using obscene language. Only two cases of a serious nature against Natives have been brought before me—namely, one for perjury at Whakatane, and the other for conspiracy at Rotorua. In the latter case two Natives from Waiotapu charged a European with an offence under the Malicious Injuries to Property Act, for which they were subsequently tried for conspiracy, committed to the Supreme Court, at which they have now been tried, convicted, and sentenced to three months' imprisonment each. General drunkenness, as one used to see it some years ago, has altogether disappeared; isolated cases, of course, still occur, but have much decreased in number. It is seldom indeed, nowadays, that liquors are made the chief commodity for consumption at death-tangis. This improvement is generally perceivable in all parts of the district, except perhaps, Rotorua; here even, I fancy, from what I see and hear, that a great deal of noise is made over a very small quantity of beer, which seems to be the favourite beverage amongst the majority of the Natives. Very little spirits are consumed by them nowadays; a few years ago it was quite the reverse, when spirits were preferred.

The general health of the Natives during the past year has been fairly good. No serious diseases of an infectious nature have visited them. There have been a few cases of typhoid fever, but the persons attacked have generally been those who obtain their water-supply from some stagnant well below their kainga, into which all the drainage from the surrounding space percolates. In