

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.

No. 3.

G. T. WILKINSON, Esq., Native Agent, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Native Office, Otorohanga, 10th June, 1891.

In accordance with request contained in your Circular No. 1, of the 12th ultimo, I have the honour to forward herewith my annual report on the state of the Natives in my districts.

I have, &c.,

GEO. T. WILKINSON,

Government Native Agent and Land-purchase Officer.

The Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

WAIKATO, WAIPA (KING-COUNTRY), AND THAMES.

Health.

During the past year the health of the Natives in my districts has not been so good as in former years. There has been a slight epidemic of low fever at some of the settlements; and at Raglan, in November last, several Natives were attacked with typhoid fever, and, although they were carefully attended to by Mr. Bay, the Government medical officer for Natives in that district, three of them, all young people, died. Death has also been busy with the Native pensioners during the past year, no less than five having died since I sent in my last report; they were all more or less aged people. The death of one of them—namely, Hone Wetere, of Kawhia, was the result of an accident. He was thrown out of his buggy when driving from Alexandra to Kawhia, and received injuries which resulted in his death very shortly afterwards. Below are the names of the pensioners who have died during the past year, with the dates of their respective deaths, and the amount of yearly pension that each was in receipt of at the time of his death: Hauauru Poutama, 23rd August, 1890, £100; Hemi Matini, 12th November, 1890, £15; Ratima te Whakaete, 8th December, 1890, £20; Hone Wetere, 30th December, 1890, £15; Hakiriwhi Purewa, 31st March, 1891, £20. The greatest chief, and the most important person of them all from a Maori point of view, was Hauauru Poutama. He was connected with the great tribes Ngatimaniapoto, Ngatiraukawa, Waikato, and Ngatihaua. He would be about sixty-eight years of age at the time of his death. He was a most genial, kind-hearted man, and, though he was an avowed supporter of Tawhiao, he never identified himself with any of the acts of lawlessness and obstruction to progress and civilisation that so many of Tawhiao's followers are often found connected with. He was a genuine Maori rangatira of the old school, of whom there are few remaining, and of which the present generation of Maoris does not produce any. Hemi Matini was a chief of the Ngatihourua Tribe, and lived at Waitetuna, near Raglan. He was related to the late well-known and loyal chief, Wiremu Nero (William Naylor), of Raglan. Ratima te Whakaete was an old Native of the Ngatinaho hapu of Waikato. He was uncle to the well-known Major Te Wheoro. Those who took part in the Waikato war in the years 1863–64 will not fail to remember the pleasant face and burly form of Sergeant Ratima, who was in charge of the commissariat canoes that were manned by Natives, and that used to convey stores up the Waikato and Waipa Rivers for the large number of soldiers that were then living at Te Awamutu and the numerous military camps on the banks of the above-mentioned rivers. Hone Wetere was a chief of the Ngatihikairo Tribe, of Kawhia, and, although not their head chief, he was a man of considerable importance. Hakiriwhi Purewa (commonly called “Hargreaves”) was well-known to the European settlers living in the vicinity of Hamilton and Cambridge. He belonged to the Ngatihaua Tribe, and at one time had considerable influence with his people; but with increasing years he had given way to younger and more energetic men in the management of the affairs of the tribe.

Social Position.

With regard to the social position of the Natives, more especially those in the Upper Waipa and King-country, there is not much change since my last report, though I think I am justified in saying that they are gradually moving onward. The absence of much European settlement in their midst is in a measure the cause of their not making more rapid progress in civilisation. Their record for temperance still holds good, and crime is very rare amongst them. Some are going in largely for sheep-rearing (the last census gave over 12,000 sheep in the King-country owned by Maoris and half-castes); others are erecting small wooden cottages for themselves and families, which, although they are not of a very pretentious kind, serves to show that they are advancing in civilisation, when they discard their Maori whares for the wooden house of the pakeha. They are also acquiring waggons, double-furrow ploughs, mowing-machines, and other improved agricultural implements. The possession, however, of the first-named, and the almost total absence of roads throughout their districts, now proves to them how unwisely they have acted in years gone by in objecting to Government making roads for them when it was prepared to do so.

Resumé of the Year.

Hardly a year passes without something of a more or less startling nature occurring within the Waikato and King-country district, which is to be accounted for by the fact that, apart from its being one of the most populous Native districts in the North Island, there are to be found within its borders supporters of Tawhiao, Te Whiti, and Te Kooti—all of whom are more or less disturbing elements—although the latter much less so than the two former. There is no doubt that supporting the two former means, to a great extent, opposition to the Government and to laws made by Europeans, according to the frame of mind in which their supporters happen to be in at the time, and the influence and excitement they may be labouring under; and occasionally it takes the form of openly breaking and defying the law and disturbing the peace of the district. Instances of this have occurred during the past year. In October last a Native named Kerei Kaihau, known as

Tawhiao's secretary, and acting, it is said, under instructions from Tawhiao himself, deliberately pulled down a trig.-station that had been erected at Waitakaruru, in the Piako Block, within the Thames County. The reason given for this action was that the Piako Block was owned mostly by Natives who are supporters of Tawhiao, and therefore the Government had no right to put up a trig.-station there without first getting his consent. Another reason—given by Kerei Kaihau at his trial at the Resident Magistrate's Court at the Thames—was that Tawhiao ordered the station to be pulled down in order that he might raise the issue between the Government and himself as to who is to blame for the fighting between the Maoris and Europeans at Waitara and Waikato, by which the former lost their land, and, they think, their independence. The arrest of Kerei Kaihau by an armed party sent for that purpose from Auckland to Tawhiao's settlement at Pukekawa is now a matter of history, and was fully reported and criticised in the newspapers at the time. I need not therefore refer to it here, more than to say that I am of opinion that if the Government had not taken steps to have Kerei Kaihau arrested and punished, it would have been impossible in the future to have erected trig.-stations or made surveys, however necessary, in localities occupied by Natives who are supporters of Tawhiao.

During the same month that Kerei Kaihau was engaged in breaking the law as a supporter of Tawhiao, Tamahuka, *alias* Te Manukura, a disciple of Te Whiti and Tohu, of Parihaka fame, was also, with a fanatical few who live at Te Kumi, about two miles and a half from Te Kuiti Railway-station, making preparations to startle the few European families living in that locality with a sample of his madness similar to that which took place in February, 1883, when, having worked himself up to a high pitch of religious fanaticism, he seized and tied up Messrs. Hursthouse and Newsham, and treated them to great indignities, for which action he and his followers were arrested and punished. His conduct in October last was almost exactly the same as it was in 1883—that is, it was traceable to the same cause, namely, a visit to Te Whiti at Parihaka, and a fanatical outburst of enthusiasm through studying the Maori translation of the Old Testament and the accounts therein given of the rites and practices carried out by the Hebrew prophets and sooth-sayers, which, by the way, the Maoris delight to read and study, because the habits and customs there recounted are similar in many instances to their own. On his way back from Parihaka, Tamahuka began to show signs of again becoming a religious maniac, or “crank,” and by the time he reached home his sayings and actions showed that the lunatic asylum was the proper place for him for the time being. Unfortunately, his preaching, as in 1883, caused a number of the young people of his settlement to be influenced by him, and to have implicit faith in his promises and his power to fulfil them, so that in a very short time they were as complete a set of mild lunatics as he was a more pronounced one. Amongst the number of strange things that he did at that time was to fix the date of the millennium, and, having done so to his own satisfaction, he sent letters to Wahanui, Taonui, Rewi, and other important chiefs, and also to Judge Mair and myself (as representing the Native Land Court and the Government respectively), ordering us all to go and sit at his feet at Te Kumi, in order to be ready when the event should take place. He then sent messengers to the storekeepers at Te Kuiti, Otorohanga, Alexandra, and Te Awamutu, ordering them to give him credit for goods to an unlimited extent, which, with one exception, was refused. This refusal annoyed him, so he decided, for the sake of his reputation, to make a bold move by going with his followers to take possession of the Europeans' stores at Te Kuiti. Knowing the nature of the man and his followers, and the likely result of their madness, I took the precaution to keep the Native Minister and yourself well informed as to his actions, with the result that, by the time his disease had developed into that acute stage in which a lunatic may be expected to commit a serious crime if not checked, arrangements had been made for the arrest of himself and followers, which was done by an armed force sent by special train from Auckland on the morning after he had taken possession of Mr. Ellis's store at Te Kuiti.

I would here like to point out what a source of trouble and danger a man of this description is in a district very sparsely populated by Europeans, some of whom are women and children, more especially when it is considered that the fact of his developing symptoms of religious lunacy means that in a short time he will have a numerous following of the weak-minded of his own people, who, given time, and no power at hand to check them, will, in a few days or weeks, have worked themselves into such a state that it is merely a matter of chance whether property only, or human life, or both, may be sacrificed at their hands. Surely some steps can be taken by which men of Te Mahuki's class can be dealt with by the law as soon as they show unmistakable signs of deranged intellect, and thus keep them from influencing others of equally weak minds as themselves, and so avert a catastrophe.

Election of Maori Members for House of Representatives.

The fact of the general election taking place in November last it was necessary for the Maoris to return a member for each of the four Maori electoral districts in accordance with “The Maori Representation Act, 1867.” I was appointed Returning Officer for the Western District, which is bounded by the West Coast from the Waitemata Harbour to Wellington, and by a line drawn nearly through the centre of the Island. The electorate contained eighty-nine polling places. There were five candidates—namely, Hoani Taipua (the late member), Pepene Eketone, Kipa te Whatanui, Te Kahui Kararehe, and Pataua te Whataupoko. Hoani Taipua was returned by a large majority.

Maori Census.

The quinquennial census of the Maori population was taken during the third week of February last. I was appointed Enumerator for the Counties of Eden, Manukau, Waikato, Raglan, Kawhia, Waipa, Piako, Ohinemuri, Thames, and Coromandel, and also for the Great and Little Barrier and Waiheke Islands. In addition to which I also took part of West Taupo and Clifton Counties at the request of the Enumerators for those two counties.

The returns for the counties and islands allotted to me gave a total number of 7,682, including half-castes living as members of a Maori tribe, which, compared with the numbers for the same counties in 1886, shows a decrease over the whole of 536. This, however, must not be looked upon as absolutely correct, because the King Natives, wherever they were living, refused to give any information whatsoever regarding themselves, their cultivation, or their live-stock, so that returns from districts where they are living are, so far as they are concerned, estimated. Out of the ten counties above mentioned, three only show a decrease, whilst seven and the islands show an increase. The largest decrease is in Kawhia County, and the next largest in Thames County. The former is, I think, accounted for by the fact that, since the last census was taken in 1886, Tawhiao's large settlement at Whatiwhatihoe (within Kawhia County) has broken up, and the Natives who then lived there are now scattered about, but mostly, when not away gum-digging, living at Pukekawa within Raglan County, and at Maungakawa and Maungatautari within Piako County. The decrease in the Thames County is caused, I think, by a falling-off of the number of Natives from other districts that have been in the habit of going yearly to the Tairua and Whangamata Gumfields. There were large numbers of them there in 1886. For further particulars regarding the Maori census, I would refer you to my census returns and report.

Native Land Court in the King-country.

The Native Land Court has not reopened here since its adjournment in December last, so that nothing has been done to put the titles to Native land in the Rohepotae Block (or King-country) in a more satisfactory condition than that in which they were left when the Court adjourned. The Court has now been sitting here more or less continuously since July, 1886, and orders have been made for 254 blocks, representing an area of over a million and a half acres of land. But, although the owners of those blocks have been declared by Court, and their names duly recorded in the Court's orders, there are nearly a hundred blocks, representing collectively more than a million acres of some of the best land in the King-country, in which there has been no definition by the Court of the owners' interests. Owners having large ownership, others with small ownership, and many with no ownership at all, other than that they were included in the lists of names by the real owners through *aroha* (affection, or out of compliment), or through marriage with those who have ownership, are to be found huddled together, so to speak, in the Court's orders, with nothing to show of what nature or extent their ownership is, thus making those blocks and that enormous area not only unattainable, but unnegotiable also for the purposes of settlement. The titles to blocks which are in this unfinished state are for the purpose of Government purchase found to be very embarrassing, but how much more would they be found embarrassing in the cases of private purchasers were the Government restriction against private purchase removed from the Rohepotae Block. In some of the blocks referred to the owners are numbered by hundreds, so that a purchaser might buy out three-fourths of the owners on the assumption that their shares were all equal and pay accordingly, and then find that although he had paid away three-fourths of the purchase-money he had not acquired one-fourth of the block, and this could only be ascertained by him after the block had again been put into the Native Land Court and the owners' interests defined. But how much more satisfactory and how much easier it would have been to have defined the interests when the block was before the Court in the first instance; then everything in connection with the block was fresh in the mind of the Court: its history, its boundaries, and the rights of those claiming to own it had all been carefully inquired into and the list of names as passed by the Court was the result of such investigation. This surely was the proper time for the Court to take the next and most important of all steps in connection with that block—namely, to define the interests of the owners. No subsequent Court could do it with such little difficulty as could the Court that made the original investigation into the title to the block, and I am of opinion that, when the Court investigates the title to a block of Native land and declares the owners thereof without defining the interest of each, it defeats the real purpose for which the Native Land Court was established in New Zealand—namely, to exchange the Native title for that of one from the Crown, in order to facilitate the settlement of the country.

Government Land Purchase.

The purchase of land by Government from the Native owners of Rohepotae Block has not progressed at a very rapid rate during the past year, as the Natives still have a decided objection to selling, or rather, to put it more correctly, they do not yet feel sufficiently the want of money to cause them to part with their land to obtain it. I find that in cases where they really are in want of money they do not discriminate as to who the purchaser is—whether Government or speculator—so long as their desire is satisfied; although, at the present time, the majority of them are agitating for the removal of the restriction against private purchase, on the plea that they can get a better price from the private purchaser than the Government pays. Notwithstanding the numerous drawbacks to contend against, such as the unwillingness of the owners to sell, the defective state of the titles already referred to, and the uncertainty of the area of the blocks until they are surveyed, some progress has, however, been made. The Government has ten blocks at present under purchase, and, supposing the shares of all the owners in each to be equal, it has acquired about 10,500 acres to date. Negotiations are also in progress for the purchase of four other blocks, containing altogether about 30,000 acres. Two of these, representing about 20,000 acres, can be completed forthwith on the surveys being made and the areas known, because the number of owners in each was purposely made few by the Natives in order to facilitate sale.

Visit of the Hon. the Native Minister to Otorohanga.

The Hon. Mr. Cadman, as Native Minister, paid a visit to the Ngatimaniapoto Tribe at Otorohanga in April last, accompanied by Mr. Lewis, the Under-Secretary for the Native Department. He was cordially welcomed by the Natives, and kept fully employed during the two days and nights

that he was here, as almost every conceivable matter connected with the Natives in this district and with the Rohepotae Block was brought under his notice. But the one matter on which the Natives laid the most stress, and concerning which they appeared to be unanimous, was that Government should remove the restriction against private purchase of land within the Rohepotae or King-country Block. They see plainly that their land is enhanced in value by the thousands of pounds of public money that have been spent in making the railway through it, also in making the road to the Waitomo caves, and the few other roads that are in this locality; and from evidence that is not wanting they believe that Government is not likely to do anything more in the way of spending public money on their property, so they would now like to be free from the incubus of the Government restriction over their land, and be allowed to sell it in the best market whenever they are ready to do so, with all its improved value caused by Government expenditure. One of the speakers (Mr. John Ormsby) pointed out several defects in the present working of the Native Land Court, and made suggestions towards remedying the same, notes of which were taken by the Hon. Mr. Cadman, and which will, I have no doubt, be duly considered by him.

The usual requests for roads, bridges, punts, railway-sidings, &c., were made by the Natives to the Native Minister, and some of them were slightly taken aback when he informed them that in the case of European communities, when they wanted small matters of that sort which would benefit themselves only, they usually held meetings and collected money for the purpose that was required, and did the work themselves without going to the Government for help. The Natives were impressed, I think, with the common sense and reasonableness of that view of the question, and it had the effect at the same time of opening their eyes to the fact that, in the matter of dealing with Native requests, the saying that "the old order changeth" has applied with equal force to them as it has to others during the past few years.

During the Native Minister's visit Te Kooti (who lives near Otorohanga) had a long interview with him in connection with matters concerning himself and also the Urewera Tribe, over which he has great influence and of which he is at present the guide and counsellor.

Native-land Laws Commission.

The Native-land Laws Commissioners visited Otorohanga in April last for the purpose of getting the views of Ngatimaniapoto chiefs and others as to the direction in which the proposed new legislation for Native lands should tend. The chiefs and people refused, however, to give their views, or make any suggestion whatsoever to the Commissioners. They were at that time very much taken up with their endeavours to get Government to remove the restriction against private purchase over the Rohepotae Block, so, instead of making suggestions to the Commission as to the proposed new Native-land laws, they thought they would improve the occasion by endeavouring to make use of the Commission to get the Government to remove the restriction from Rohepotae Block. They, therefore, as much as told the Commissioners that they had better first get Government to remove the restriction, and then come to them to ascertain their views with regard to the new Native-land laws. It is to be regretted that they acted in this way, because they and the Urewera Tribe may be said to be the only tribes in New Zealand whose lands are at the present time in what may be called a virgin or intact state, *i.e.*, have not yet been affected by sales or leases; so that any new laws that may hereafter be made for the management of and disposal of Native lands will have a far more important bearing upon them and their lands than those of any other tribe in New Zealand.

Survey of Roads in the King-country.

Now that the Rohepotae or King-country Block is being subdivided by the Native Land Court, I would suggest that the present is a good time to have the main roads from Alexandra and Kihikihi laid off by survey to their junction at Otorohanga, and then continued on in the direction in which the traffic is likely to extend in the future—namely, to the head of the navigation of the Mokau River, at the settlement called Totoro, and also following the direction of the railway-line to connect with the roads that are now being made from the Poro-o-Tarao tunnel to Taumarunui (the head of navigation on the Whanganui River), and also the road to Taranaki *via* the Ohura Valley, as those are the only roads that are likely to be used for some time to come, that is, until settlement extends over this district. If these roads are defined, any Natives desirous of fencing in their land could see by the survey marks, or could find out by inquiry, where the road is, and could erect their fences accordingly. The formation of the roads could be made hereafter as desired. If these road-surveys are made now, I am of opinion that not only will a great deal of obstruction to roads by Maoris be averted, but the fact of their being defined now would enable the Native Land Court—if such roads were shown upon plans of land brought before it—to utilise them, in cases where suitable, as boundaries between tribes and hapus, thus further lessening the probability of Maori obstruction hereafter. In the cases of blocks that may hereafter be acquired by the Crown, the fact of some of the main roads being already defined would mean so much less road-surveying to be done when the blocks are subdivided, previous to their being disposed of.

Tawhiao's Annual Meeting.

Tawhiao's annual meeting, which was held last year at his new settlement at Pukekawa, was this year held at Whatiwhatihoe, or rather it was commenced at Whatiwhatihoe, and adjourned from there to Maungakawa, near to Cambridge. Nothing, however, of much political importance took place. There was, of course, the usual condemnation of Native Land Courts, surveys, and selling of land. One of the matters discussed was the proposed removal of the bones of Potatau (Tawhiao's father) and other important Waikato chiefs that had been buried in past years at Te Kuiti, Hikurangi, and Whatiwhatihoe, to Pukekawa. It was finally decided that this should be done, and two new canoes have been made in the bush, at Pirongia, for the special purpose of conveying them down the river,

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

kaingas where the water-supply consists of a running stream this dreadful fever is seldom heard of, Natives, however, become so attached to old localities that they even prefer to die there, rather than remove their residences to more healthful spots.

The recent census, just compiled, seems to indicate a considerable decrease in the rate of mortality in the various districts throughout the North Island. In these districts the rate is unusually low, not exceeding more than twenty per thousand during the period of the last five years. There is, however, one very noticeable fact, that is, the disappearance of the very old Maoris, who appear to have nearly all died off. This may, in a measure, account for the present favourable state of affairs, which, however, may again be altered during the next decade, through the ordinary process of nature, when the present middle-aged will be numbered amongst the old, and many of them die off.

The Natives year by year appear to become more thrifty and industrious, and as a result cultivate considerable areas of crop, consisting of maize, wheat, oats, and potatoes, which usually realise fair prices. Besides these sources of acquiring money, many are periodically engaged in cutting flax for the various mills, while others are employed on the gumfields, and some fifty on railway-works. Occasionally Natives compete with their European neighbours for contracts on roads, some of which they sometimes succeed in securing; but I am inclined to think Natives who persevere in agricultural pursuits are in the long run the best off.

Of course the Natives have been subject to the usual excitements in the shape of Kingite meetings, and a meeting with Te Kooti in the Urewera country and surrounding settlements about Whakatane. There are several Natives, both here and at Maketu, who professedly are Kingites, and these generally attend Tawhiao's meetings. Many of them were present at Pukekawa, in Waikato, not long since, when, if rumour speaks correctly, Te Pokiha, of Maketu, and other prominent chiefs from this locality, strongly advocated petitions for the return of the confiscated lands; but, when Tawhiao suggested they should form themselves into a Committee and take the matter in hand, they all discovered that they were too busy with their agricultural pursuits to devote that amount of time which a scheme of the magnitude proposed required, consequently it was left to Tawhiao and his immediate people to take what action they deemed fit.

The big flood which took place in the month of February caused considerable damage to potato- and kumara-crops growing on low-lying ground, but the loss does not seem to have been sufficient to deprive them of food. It will, no doubt, leave them without more potatoes than they require for actual use. This flood only affected the settlements about Opotiki and Whakatane.

The crops throughout the district appear very good, and I hear no grumbling with respect to them as a whole. The principal event of the year has been His Excellency the Governor's visit to the Urewera, with which the Urewera appear highly delighted, and regret that His Excellency could not have visited them a little sooner, when they had a large assemblage of Natives met together at Ruatahuna attending the opening of a large meeting-house. An attempt was made to keep this assemblage together to meet His Excellency, but, as some three weeks elapsed between the time this meeting broke up and His Excellency's arrival, the want of food gradually dispersed many of those who otherwise would have been present at Ruatoki to meet His Excellency. Every Urewera I have since met has expressed himself much pleased with the visit, and I have every reason to believe that it will prove most beneficial in time to come, as I already hear considerable talk amongst a section of the Urewera with respect to having some of their lands surveyed and put through the Native Land Court. These are two subjects hitherto strenuously objected to by these people, and even opposed with threats to kill those who persisted in introducing surveyors within their boundaries.

Fifteen Native schools have been in full work during the past year, in which the average attendance has been fairly well maintained and very good progress made. Applications have been received requesting the establishment of new schools in fresh localities, in which the Natives interested have expressed a willingness to give land for the sites for the same. In some of these schools the teachers and pupils labour under great disadvantages, particularly in the winter months.

A fair number of interests have been acquired in the blocks of land under purchase by the Crown. Some of these have been completed, while in others, which are probably fancy spots to Natives, little progress has been made, owing to the owners, from old associations, being reluctant to part with their shares.

The Natives generally appear to be more settled than they have been for years, and to depend more on themselves and their own resources; consequently there are very few begging letters received as compared to what were so received a few years ago. This alone is a favourable indication, and proves that with more settled occupations the Natives are able to supply their own wants without outside aid. In what may be termed industrious districts—*i.e.*, districts in which Natives cultivate grain extensively, there are what may be termed very few idlers hanging about Native Land Courts: they only attend when actually interested. Of course, persons coming from a distance are compelled to be in attendance the whole time, or until their cases are disposed of. It is a pity that Natives waste so much time in contesting boundaries of land of little value, instead of allowing the Court to ascertain tribes who own, and then divide fairly amongst them, irrespective of boundaries. This mode of procedure would save both the Maoris' time and pocket. No public works have been carried on by Natives under my control.

I have, &c.,

The Under-Secretary, Native Department,
Wellington.

R. S. BUSH,
Resident Magistrate.

No. 5.

J. BOOTH, Esq., R.M., Gisborne, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Resident Magistrate's Office, Gisborne, 26th June, 1891.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Circular-letter No. 1, of the 8th May, 1891.

I regret the delay in furnishing my report, which delay has been caused by my absence at Wairoa and at Awanui, and since my return from the latter place a few days ago I have been very busy making up arrears of work here.

I am pleased to be able to report that the condition of the Natives throughout this district is satisfactory. Their drinking habits have been almost entirely given up. As a rule they are industrious, and they can now obtain constant work all the year round—in winter, bush-felling and clearing; in summer, shearing and preparing grass-seed. In addition to this many of them are owners of sheep, and the majority of them are very comfortably off.

The Natives in my district number, according to the last census, 5,926—namely, County of Waiaapu, 2,213; County of Cook, 1,328; Resident Magistrate's District of Wairoa, 2,385. The number of sheep owned by Natives in the whole district is 60,000; cattle, about 4,000; pigs, about 7,500. The produce in the Wairoa portion of the district for last year was: Wheat, 5,560 bushels; oats, 4,300 bushels; maize, 6,500 bushels; whale-oil, 10 tuns; bales of wool, 225. In the East Coast portion of the district there have been in crop during the year: Potatoes, 700 acres; maize and other crops, about 1,000 acres.

There are eight Native schools in the district, all in good working order, and well attended. Applications are in for three more schools on the coast. It is very desirable that schools should be established in the Urewera country, but up to this time no application has been made by the Natives, who do not seem to appreciate the benefit of an English education.

Resident Magistrate's Courts have been held by me at Wairoa every alternate month, at Tologa Bay once a quarter, and at Awanui once a quarter. The following cases in which Natives were interested have been disposed of:—Gisborne: Criminal cases 44, convictions 34; civil—Native defendants 71, Native plaintiffs 6, Native plaintiffs and defendants 11. Tologa Bay: Criminal, *nil*; civil—Native defendants 8, Native plaintiff 1, Native plaintiffs and defendants 3. Awanui: Criminal, 26 (none serious); civil—Native defendants 34, Native plaintiffs 3, Native plaintiffs and defendants 23. Wairoa: Criminal, 14; civil—Native defendants 37, Native plaintiffs 5, Native plaintiffs and defendants 17.

The general health of the Natives throughout the district has been good. Excepting a few cases of typhoid fever, generally amongst the children, there has been no epidemic disease.

T. W. Lewis, Esq., Under-Secretary,
Wellington.

I have, &c.,
J. BOOTH,
Resident Magistrate.

No. 6.

Captain PREECE, R.M., Napier, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Resident Magistrate's Office, Napier, 2nd June, 1891.

In accordance with the instructions contained in your circular of the 8th ultimo, I have the honour to forward the following report of the state of the Natives in the district under my charge:—

NAPIER.

The Natives continue planting wheat and oats largely. They have had good crops this season, but I have not been able, owing to pressure of work, to get any details of the amount grown at the different settlements.

During the late strike in August last Natives were employed in discharging and loading vessels and other work. A number of Natives have also been employed at the different stations during the shearing-season. This work attracts a number of young Natives from the Urewera country, who now come down regularly every season.

The Natives of this district own 89,105 sheep; a large proportion of these are in the Inland Patea district. The number of bales of wool produced this year were 1,350. The Patea Natives employ Europeans largely, and I understand pay them well. I have only had one or two cases of disputed wages.

The Native Land Court has been sitting for some time past at Waipawa adjudicating on the Waikopiro Block, which is being reheard. There is a large amount of work on hand in this district for the Court; the Manawakaitoi and Rakautatahi Blocks, original cases, have yet to be heard, besides a number of subdivisions and applications for smaller blocks. I consider that it would take at least two years' continuous sitting to get through the work for which applications are made, or rehearings pending.

The number of cases heard in the Resident Magistrate's Court at Napier, Hastings, Waipawa, Ormondville, Danevirke, and Woodville, in which Maoris were concerned, were as follows: Civil cases—European plaintiffs and Maori defendants, 116; amount sued for, £1,340 0s. 4d.; amount recovered, £915 18s. 5d. Maori plaintiffs and European defendants, 5; amount sued for, £144 15s. 6d.; amount recovered, £94 16s. Maori plaintiffs and Maori defendants, 4; amount sued for, £110 14s. 6d.; amount recovered, £46 16s. Criminal cases: Breach of by-laws, convicted, 1; drunkenness, convicted, 15; railway by-laws, convicted, 1; Shipping and Seamen's Act, dismissed, 1; Justice of

the Peace Act, dismissed, 1 ; Public Works Act, convicted, 3 ; assault on police, dismissed, 1 ; assault on police, convicted, 1 ; larceny as a bailee, committed for trial, 1 ; cattle-stealing, dismissed, 1. There have been no serious charges against Natives during the past year.

Dealings in Native Lands.

In the Trust Commissioners' Court there have been eighty-eight deeds inquired into under "The Native Lands Frauds Prevention Act, 1881," and the amendment Acts, 255 Natives examined, eleven judgments of the Supreme Court inquired into under section 8 of the Act of 1881, and eleven Natives examined. The work in this Court has increased very much since "The Native Land Laws Act, 1888," came into operation. I have examined Natives at Napier, also at Hastings, Waipawa, Danevirke, and Woodville, when visiting those places on magisterial duties.

General State of the Natives.

There have been very few disturbances among the Natives themselves during this year ; I have had occasion to visit them for the purpose of settling disputes only on two occasions. The general state of health among the Natives has been good. The census has been taken this year, and shows an increase of 706 Natives, as against the census of 1886. This is partly to be accounted for by there being a decrease in the number of deaths among children, and partly by Natives from other places having moved here, owing to the more prosperous condition of this district.

WAIROA DISTRICT.

The Natives of this district maintain their reputation for good behaviour, there having been no quarrels among them of any importance.

The Native Land Court sat in this district in January last and disposed of the rehearing of the Waihua Block. This will be a source of satisfaction to the Natives, as the rent has been paid into the hands of the Public Trustee for some years pending the determination of interests of certain hapus, who were named in the original title ; but the names of the individuals belonging to those hapus have been unascertained from the time the land went through the Court in 1867 until the Court recently heard the case. The Court has now given an order on the Public Trustee to pay the rent, which will now be distributed.

The number of cases heard in the Resident Magistrate's Court in which Maoris were concerned were as follows : European plaintiffs, Maori defendants, 37 ; amount sued for, £242 5s. 5d. ; amount recovered, £149 3s. 7d. Maori plaintiffs, European defendants, 5 ; amount sued for, £89 1s. 3d. ; amount recovered, £12 1s. Between Maoris only, 17 ; amount sued for, £327 10s. ; amount recovered, £2 17s. 6d. Criminal cases : Assault, convicted, 1 ; larceny, dismissed, 1 ; cattle-stealing, dismissed, 2 ; drunkenness, convicted, 3 ; cruelty to animals, convicted, 1 ; furious riding, convicted, 1 ; resisting police, convicted, 1 ; lunacy, committed, 1 ; Dog Registration Act, convicted, 3.

The Natives have grown 5,560 bushels of wheat, 4,300 bushels of oats, 6,500 bushels of maize. At Te Mahia five whales have been captured, which have turned out ten tuns of oil. Owing to the low price of oil this industry is not followed to the extent it was in former years. The Natives own 16,039 sheep, which have produced 225 bales of wool.

In conclusion, I beg to state that, on the whole, I consider that the general state of the Natives in this district is satisfactory. They are fairly industrious, and I think that they are becoming more provident than they have been in former years. The Maoris all over the district join with Europeans in field-sports, and have properly organised football teams ; in the latter they have greatly distinguished themselves. Large numbers of elderly Natives travel to Napier and elsewhere to witness the matches. The usual good feeling exists between the races. A number of Natives have joined the local Volunteer corps, and they take great pains to make themselves efficient.

The Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

GEORGE PREECE, R.M.

No. 7.

W. RENNELL, Esq., Reserves Trustee, New Plymouth, to the UNDER-SECRETARY,
Native Department.

SIR,—

New Plymouth, 29th May, 1891.

I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 8th instant, and in reply to state that I have nothing of special interest to report as having taken place amongst the Natives of my district during the past year. They are quietly cultivating at their respective villages, which is a great improvement on their parading the district in large numbers to and from Parihaka, as they were in the habit of doing a few years ago.

The census apparently reveals a decrease in their numbers since 1886, but, as at that time many Natives from other districts were visiting Te Whiti, the decrease may mean that the visitors have departed to their homes. The only way of getting information for census purposes in this district is to get it from any Native of a village who may be willing to impart his local knowledge, and, as he may, and doubtless does, omit names, the information is not very accurate, especially as there are villages where no one will give information, and the Enumerators must trust to outsiders for what he wants.

The Natives generally are in good health, but the mortality amongst them is high, especially so with the children; and this uncertainty of life amongst the young may account for the apathy generally displayed by the Natives towards education, although I am happy to say that a few Parihaka children attend a private European school established at Pungarehu, about two miles from the Parihaka Village; and, as it is proposed to make this an aided school, I would suggest that a little aid from Government would be money well spent if given to the Educational Board towards support of this school, it being specially advisable to encourage Native children from Parihaka to attend school, as, if education becomes general amongst the Parihaka Natives, the feeling will spread, I hope, all through the district.

The Under-Secretary, Native Department,
Wellington.

I have, &c.,

W. RENNELL,
Reserves Trustee.

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