

In this case they were getting the Natives to pull the chestnuts out of the fire for them. When the land question was settled, and when, as a consequence, they had a large population settled in the district, it would be time enough to talk of the telephone and the telegraph.

“Another luxury that was asked for was a hotel. Now, this request spoilt everything else on the list. (Laughter.) He was surprised that in a place like that, so far from Hunterville, they could have got to know that such a thing as a hotel existed. (More laughter.) In fact he had thought *waipiro* could never have been brought so far inland. (Renewed laughter.) It was really strange that in the absence of a bridge across the river any one would take the trouble to cart up *waipiro*. (Great laughter) When the Rev Mr Isitt, the temperance lecturer, read in the paper that the Natives were requesting the Government to establish a special licensing district among them he would not be surprised to hear that he would shortly visit Moawhango. In fact he (Mr. Seddon) would recommend him to come at once—the sooner the better, so that he might show them that what they really wanted was a temperance lecturer to teach them to drink cold water. He himself would much prefer that there never should be a publichouse in the district.

“The Premier went on to point the moral, and adorn it with a tale. Once upon a time there was a miners’ camp on the West Coast where the *waipiro* had run out. The miners took to drinking Painkiller, and soon finished this. As a last resort one of them laid siege to Jacob’s Oil, and this finished him. At this there was great laughter from the Maoris, and they all directed their gaze upon one of their number, who sheepishly hung his head. It appeared that the Premier had scored off a Native sly-grog seller without knowing it. This Native’s name was Jacob, and his compatriots took the allusion to the deadly properties of St. Jacob’s Oil to apply to Jacob’s whiskey.”

That the Maoris were much happier in their primitive state must be apparent to every thoughtful observer. The scientific inventions of the age are very well in their way, but, to one who thinks at all, Max Adeler’s observation on the happiest way to live must carry weight. “It has always seemed to me that village life is the happiest and most comfortable, and that the busy city man who would establish his home where he can have repose without inconvenience and discomfort should place it amid the trees and flowers and by the grassy highway of some pretty hamlet, where the noise of the world’s greater commerce never comes, and where isolation and companionship are both possible without an effort. Such a home, planted judiciously in a half-acre, where children can romp and play, and where one can cultivate a few flowers and vegetables, mingling the sentimental heliotrope with the practical cabbage, and the ornamental verbena with the useful onion, may be made an earthly paradise.”

SETTLEMENT OF THE COUNTRY.

The Premier made an important announcement to the Natives of Moawhango respecting the settlement of Native lands.

“He (the Premier) desired to point out that the time had now arrived when settlement must no longer be retarded. The land could not be allowed to lie unproductive, for the European population was increasing, and every day longer this state of things was allowed to continue the worse it would be for the Natives. One section of the Natives wanted to have their lands subdivided and partitioned off so that they might individually and single-handed deal with them. Now, in cases where the subdivisions were small, and hundreds of Natives to put into one certificate, very little benefit resulted to the Native owners. The costs incidental to subdivision ate up the value of the land. Years ago the Natives used to engage in tribal conflicts, but now, instead of fighting each other in battle, they went into Court and fought over their claims to the land. They were no better off by doing so, litigation impoverished them, and a Maori, metaphorically speaking, might as well be killed almost as left without land or means. If this sort of thing went on it would happen by-and-by that all their land would be eaten up by the lawyers, the Native agents, and the expenses of Courts. (Laughter.) Perhaps the reason why they were asking for a policeman was in order that he should lock up the lawyers, Native agents, and pakeha-Maoris who came into the place. (More laughter.) If so, there was some solid ground for their request. Now, his visit to the Native settlements was for the purpose of ascertaining the Native mind on the subject of their lands, and he wished the Natives to speak to him freely and without reservation, as one friend would to another. Did they wish for subdivision of their lands, or did they desire to hand it to the Government through trustees in whom they had confidence—men who would be empowered to deal directly with the Government, and who would safeguard Native interests? There were a large number of people in the colony who said that when the land was held under Native custom and was not occupied the Government should proclaim it as Crown land, and pay over the proceeds to the Native owners. If the Natives would fight and quarrel over the proceeds, that was their misfortune, any way, whilst they were so doing settlement would not be stopped. He did not consider that this would be a fair thing. When the Natives were all-powerful they treated the pakehas as friends. Now that the pakehas were all-powerful it behoved them to return the kindness of the Natives and to deal fairly with them. This was why he said that the longer they delayed coming to some definite arrangement with the Government, and having a more simple and rapid way of dealing with their lands, the worse it would be for them. The process, he thought, was simple. First of all they needed to arrange amongst themselves how much land they were prepared to dispose of. Then it would be the duty of the Government to see, in arriving at the details, that the Natives were provided with ample reserves for their support. Either this, or the Government should issue debentures in payment for the land, these debentures to bear interest and to be non-transferable, so that the Natives could not be pauperised. The interest accruing from these debentures would be equal to an annuity for themselves and their children for all time. Now, a short time ago the Government paid large sums of money to some of the Natives in this district for their lands. He now ascertained that from these Natives both lands and money were gone. That was not good either for the Natives or for the