

W. E. Thomas, Esq.
—continued.

The clauses in your circular which will be applicable in furnishing the information sought for, are those which relate to the numbers of the Native population, their state of feeling towards Europeans, their physical and moral condition, and the present or prospective effect of any recent legislation in respect of Native lands, education, and representation, concluding with any general information which I may consider desirable to add.

I may shortly state that I shall pass over the reference made in your circular to the progress of Hauhauism, and feeling of the Natives in respect of the war, beyond noticing that the Natives of this district, both Maoris and the aborigines, Morioris, deprecate and regret both these evils, and have never since their existence shown any disposition to join the fanatics or combatants. A slight sympathy was displayed on the part of the Maoris at the time of the Taranaki war, when their relative Wiremu Kingi Rangitake was involved in hostilities against the Government on the Waitara question.

On my arrival here in August, 1863, I found the numbers of the Native population to be as follows:—

Maoris.—Men, 198; women, 163; boys, 28; girls, 24. Total, 413.

Morioris.—Men, 84; women, 64; boys, 7; girls, 5. Total, 160.

Europeans.—Men, 24; women, 9; boys, 9; girls, 4. Total, 46.

Three years later, in 1866, the Native population numbered—

Maoris.—Men, 145; women, 139; boys, 39; girls, 48. Total, 371.

Morioris.—Men, 62; women, 47; boys, 5; girls, 2. Total, 116.

Europeans.—Men, 56; women, 17; boys, 11; girls, 11. Total, 95.

At the commencement of the present year the Native population numbered—

Maoris.—Men, 86; women, 69; boys, 34; girls, 29. Total, 218.

Morioris.—Men, 48; women, 31; boys, 5; girls, 4. Total, 88.

Europeans.—Men, 66; women, 26; boys, 22; girls, 22. Total, 136.

I have not noted the numbers of the different populations in the intervening periods, as no marked changes occurred until August, 1867, when the measles carried off—

Maoris.—Men, 16; women, 17; boys, 1; girls, 1. Total, 35.

Morioris.—Men, 6; women, 11. Total, 17.

And until December of last year also, when a migration of souls, as per margin and as follows, took place to the district of Taranaki:—Men, 44; women, 52; children, 30.

Maoris	...	116	During my term of office they have shown no animosity to Europeans, and have to all outward appearances lived on good terms with them, without shirking the opportunity of making as much use of the Pakeha as they found contributed to their own interests.
Morioris	...	9	
Kanaka	...	1	
TOTAL	...	126	

The Maori and Moriori—both pointing towards one common origin as a race, together with their traditions, the main features of which accord—live for the most part together in the same settlements, the Moriori under subserviency to the Maori, and both jealous one of another. The Morioris are fast dying out, and their physical capabilities reach a low standard, their character displaying a total want of energy.

On two occasions only have the Maoris endeavoured to interfere with the liberty of their former slaves, which I have, of course, strenuously upheld—the one instance being one in which a Moriori girl was sought to be detained by her former Maori master; and the other in which a Maori sought to detain a Moriori woman, his wife by reputation, and who was desirous of being legally married to one of her own people.

In the seasons of 1863–64–65, the Maoris, with a view of maintaining themselves, were engaged in potato cultivating, and trading with coasting vessels from New Zealand. During this period also a small cattle trade sprung up, which has lasted at uncertain intervals up to the present time. Between that period and up to the present they have possessed themselves of more sheep, finding the trade for potatoes virtually gone. I would reckon the number of their sheep at 2,800, deducting from this number about 800 disposed of at this time by those who are anxious to leave the Islands for the district of Taranaki. The sale of these cattle, the possession of these sheep, and rents accruing from the leasing of tracts of land to Europeans, form now their principal sources of maintenance.

The recent legislation on Native lands will do much to remove the jealousies existing amongst themselves, *i.e.*, between Maori and Maori, and Maori and Moriori, and will prove, I doubt not, of much benefit in every way, provided that there are sufficient restrictions imposed by the Land Court on the alienability of too large an area of land.

The subject of their lands, and the wish of several of them to remove to Taranaki, have been the means of their laying aside from consideration the advantages I have pointed out would accrue to them from turning their attention to the recent legislation on education. There is only at present one resident Native teacher amongst the Maoris—a Wesleyan; the main body of both Maoris and Morioris belong to the Church of England—none to the Romish persuasion.

The cause of their wish to remove to Taranaki is influenced by the present decline of trade, and the lack of a sufficient market for produce in the Islands, and by their wish also to enjoy the advantages which a more civilized district would afford.

I have abstained from noting any information in regard to the Maori prisoners, who number at present 166, with 64 women and 74 children, considering that such would be uncalled for. Nor are the late military guard included in the above returns of European population.

I have, &c.,

W. E. THOMAS,
Resident Magistrate.

The Native Secretary, &c., Wellington.