

No. 3.

Mr. S. VON STURMER, R.M., Hokianga, to the UNDER SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Resident Magistrate's Office, Hokianga, 11th May, 1878.

In reply to your circular letter of the 17th January, 1878, asking for a census of the Maori and half-caste population in this district, I have the honor to forward the annexed return, which may be looked upon as strictly accurate, every name being entered in the tribal register in my office, and copies of the same having been checked at the various settlements.

It will be observed that the present census shows a decrease of 8 per cent. in the Native population, since the census taken by me in 1874. A considerable number of the young men have with their families left the district for Kaipara and Whangaroa to obtain work in the extensive kauri forests connected with the different saw-mills in the above-named places, and at the same time about thirty persons belonging to Mangamuka, who have been residing on the East Coast for many years, have lately returned to their homes.

Since 1874, when the last census was taken, this district has been visited by two epidemics—viz., measles in 1875, and whooping-cough during the past and present years—both of which have carried off a large number of infants, the former also being in a great number of cases fatal to the delicate youth of both sexes. Diseases of the chest, scrofulous sores, and low fever are also very prevalent, and have been the cause of many deaths. A great deal of the sickness from which the Maori population suffers may be traced to the careless and dirty habits of the people, and I am sorry to say in very many instances to intemperance, which is as prevalent amongst the women as the men.

Very many settlements, which a few years since contained a large population, are now entirely deserted, and it will be observed that a number of *kaingas* named in the last census do not appear in the present one. This is accounted for by the fact that, as the Natives decrease in numbers in the smaller settlements, they desert them for the larger ones, so keeping up the population in the more important places.

I feel sure it must be plain to all observers that the Native population is slowly but surely passing away. Where so many causes exist, it is difficult to assign any particular reason. It is certainly not that the women are unfruitful, as it is not at all uncommon to find Natives who have been the parents of families of six or even ten children unable to succeed in rearing one. I may be in error, but I attribute a great deal of this to the inordinate use of spirits, and that of the worst possible description; and I believe that the parents, though naturally of strong constitutions, have in many instances so debauched themselves that they cannot become the progenitors of a population as healthy as their forefathers.

In closing this report, I cannot refrain from bringing to the notice of the Government the very valuable aid rendered to me by Mr. Bishop, the Clerk of the Court, and the Native chief and Assessor, Hone Mohi Tawhia, without whose united assistance it would have been almost impossible for me to have compiled so perfect and complete a return of the Native population as I now have the honor to lay before you.

I have, &c.,

The Under Secretary, Native Department,
Wellington.

SPENCER VON STURMER,
Resident Magistrate.

No. 4.

Mr. E. M. WILLIAMS, R.M., Bay of Islands, to the UNDER SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Resident Magistrate's Office, Waimate, Bay of Islands, 19th June, 1878.

In compliance with your letter of the 17th of January last, I have the honor to transmit herewith a census of the Maori population of this district, which, having been taken with every care to avoid the possibility of any names being either omitted or twice returned, I have every reason to believe is correct.

I regret having been unable to forward this return at the specified time, in consequence of the extent of the district and the scattered nature of the population rendering it difficult to obtain the necessary information within a given period. The present return shows a decrease amounting to 8 per cent. since the last census was taken.

No virulent disease or epidemic has prevailed to account for this decrease, nor are the Natives generally an unhealthy race of people; but their want of cleanliness, their careless mode of living, and reckless exposure of themselves to all weathers, are causes which, combined, render them an easy prey to disease, and when attacked they at once give up in despair.

The only hope for the Native race is their being induced to adopt European habits and customs; to cultivate cleanliness, a better attention to clothing and diet, and providing for themselves and their children some more comfortable shelter from the elements than the miserable hovels which they now call houses, and in which, with but few exceptions, they are content to huddle together in the greatest state of discomfort.

I have, &c.,

The Under Secretary, Native Department,
Wellington.

EDWARD M. WILLIAMS, R.M.

No. 5.

Mr. H. R. AUBREY, R.M., Whangarei, to the UNDER SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Resident Magistrate's Office, Whangarei Heads, 20th May, 1878.

I have the honor to transmit herewith the returns of the Maori and half-caste population of my district, in the form called for in your letter of the 17th January last.

The information from which this census is taken has been supplied to me chiefly by the Native