

have been no violent deaths amongst the Natives of this district during the past year, but one accidental death has occurred in the case of a half-caste girl, about eleven years of age, who was severely burnt, which caused her death. The Natives during the past year have been less addicted to drink, consequently fewer of them have been wasting their time about the township. Whakatane possesses most half-castes, there being no less than 32 there; Opotiki comes next with 22

R. S. BUSH,
Resident Magistrate.

Opotiki, 23rd April, 1881.

No. 8.

Major SCANNELL, R.M., Taupo, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Armed Constabulary ("B" Division Office), Taupo, 14th April, 1881.

In compliance with instructions contained in Circular No. 14, dated Native Office, Wellington, 9th February, 1881, I have the honor to forward the accompanying census of the Maori and half-caste population of the Taupo District on the 4th April, 1881.

The returns include all the Natives residing, on the 4th of April, within the boundaries of the Taupo Resident Magistrate's District, as laid down in the *Gazette* of 12th August, 1880, as nearly as could be ascertained, as well as a portion of the Napier and Wairoa District, extending towards Napier to the Mohaka River. A number of Natives not permanently residing in the district, who were attending a Land Court held at Taupo on that date, are also included. They belong to the Wanganui, Urewera, Ngatikahungunu, Ngatiawa, and Ngatimaniapoto Tribes; portions of the Urewera and King Country are included in the Taupo Resident Magistrate's District, but in the former it would be impossible to get the numbers of the inhabitants, as they would not allow any person to enter their country for that purpose. Those who are shown were travelling through Taupo, and, although their numbers were ascertained, they would not give their names.

In and about Tuhua the Natives would not allow the Native Sergeant of the Armed Constabulary, who was collecting the census in that portion of the district, to proceed farther than Titirapunga; he could only try and get information of the probable numbers from some of the friendly natives. This portion is, therefore, only approximate, but I believe very close to the true numbers. A similar obstruction was also experienced from the Natives round Tongariro and Ruapehu, but as the greater number were attending the Land Court at Taupo no real inconvenience was felt.

I endeavoured to get the name of each person, so as to make the returns as reliable as possible; and to guard against the same persons being shown more than once, but found it was impossible, owing to the Natives refusing to give their names, about Tuhua, Tongariro, and Ruapehu. It may be, therefore, that as the information in their cases was taken from some Natives who professed to know all the inhabitants, some slight mistakes may have been made as to numbers, and that the returns are not as rigidly exact as they might be, but I do not think any large errors have been made.

When the last census of the Maori population of this district was taken, it included, I think, only those immediately residing round the Lake, leaving out the comparatively populous centres of Tuhua, Rotoaira, and the country round Ruapehu and Tongariro, as well as the portions north of Uranui. A comparison, therefore, with the present numbers, to show the increase or decrease since, is not possible; but a reference to the returns, showing the number of adults (excluding those who are not permanently living in the district), and the proportion of the children will lead at once to the conclusion that a great decrease is taking place. Since my first arrival in the district in 1869, a very noticeable decrease in the population has taken place, principally among the children—attributable, no doubt, to want of nourishing food, exposure and neglect, and very probably also to congenital causes. No epidemic has taken place that I am aware of. About ten years ago, when small-pox was prevalent in other parts of the colony, the Taupo Natives escaped, and when measles appeared very few of them were attacked. No deaths from either of these causes took place.

During the whole time that I have been in the district the Natives about the northern and eastern shores of the Lake have barely cultivated sufficient food for their own consumption, and some years (particularly 1880) not even enough for that. They do not grow wheat, oats, or maize—only potatoes, a few kumara, and perhaps a few pumpkins. They own neither sheep nor cattle, but have a few very inferior horses, and some gaunt, half-starved pigs running half wild over the country. On the southern and western shores of the Lake the land is of a better quality, and the Natives cultivate wheat, oats, maize, as well as potatoes, melons, kumara, and pumpkins. They grind their wheat at Tokano, at a mill erected by themselves many years ago, but which, during the Hauhau disturbances, and Te Kooti's raids from 1865 to 1869, was allowed to fall into decay. It was put into repair by the Government in 1872 or 3, and is now in good working order under Native supervision. They own some sheep at Tokano and round Tongariro and Ruapehu, and sell the wool every year to Europeans. They have also a fair stock of horses and some cattle. These Natives, although very obstructive to, and jealous of, Europeans, seem much more industrious and live better than those at the northern end, who have been brought more into contact with Europeans.

The Natives in Taupo are, generally speaking, a sober people. During the last and present Land Courts held here instances of drunkenness were, taking the circumstances into consideration, comparatively few, and no quarrelling, either among themselves or with Europeans, took place.

The land about Taupo is being gradually leased by Europeans. The rents received may be used by the Natives in procuring better clothing and food, and perhaps induce them to cultivate more for sale.

Their produce, such as it is, is freely purchased by Europeans here at prices much higher than those ruling on the coast—oats ranging from 7s. to 10s. per bushel, potatoes selling freely at £8 per ton; but even with these inducements the supply is very small, and mostly from the Tokano end of the Lake.

I have, &c.,

The Under-Secretary, Native Office,
Wellington.

D. SCANNELL,
Resident Magistrate.