

The overcrowding at Parihaka also causes a more than average mortality, especially among the children. It will be seen by my return that over 1,300 Natives live there, of whom only about ninety properly belong to the place.

The difference of females over males may be accounted for by the absence of 310 males in prison, South ; but the paucity in numbers of children is striking.

I have, &c.,

R. PARRIS,

Enumerator, Taranaki and Mokau District.

The Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

No. 14.

Mr. JAMES BOOTH, R.M., Wanganui, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Native Office, Wanganui, 22nd April, 1881.

I have the honor in reply to your Circular No. 14, of 9th February, 1881, to forward herewith my census returns of the population of the Wanganui District taken on and about the 4th April, 1881.

The district which, for census purposes, I have named the Wanganui District, embraces the whole of the river settlements, the Murimotu and Patea (inland), and the coast line from the Turakina River to the Waitotara River.

It will be noticed that there is a considerable discrepancy between the accompanying returns and those sent in by Mr. R. W. Woon, in 1878. Mr. Woon's district (Upper Wanganui) was the same as that shown in my census sheets Nos. 1, 2, 3, and 4, which in my returns show 1,232 as against 1,096 in the 1878 returns. In explanation of this discrepancy, I may state that of those returned in 1878, there are now permanently resident at Parihaka, 150 ; at Murimotu, 175 ; at Taupo, 20 ; at Waikato, 70 ; at Rangitikei, 32 ; at Waitara, 10 ; at various other places out of the district, say, 40 : making a total of 497.

With reference to the Murimotu residents, they were returned by me in 1878 as being in that district ; and I find that they were also returned by Mr. Woon as members of the Wanganui Tribes. A good many also in the 1878 return have been returned in two several places of residence, and occasionally one man appears under two or three different names. These mistakes are liable to occur under the most careful supervision, as when Natives are willing to give the required information, they not unfrequently try to swell up the numbers in their own particular *kaingas* to give them greater importance. You will perceive that, after allowing for absentees, there is still a deficiency of 177 in the total numbers.

With reference to sheet No. 8, I cannot guarantee its accuracy. The principal Natives of Ruopuanga and Patea were absent at Taupo at the Land Court. Those remaining at the *kaingas* would not supply any information to the enumerator ; but as I had a very careful list taken in 1878 this was checked over, and an estimate was made which is pretty nearly correct, though not absolutely reliable.

I am not aware of any prevailing disease amongst the Natives of this district ; but one thing seems to be certain, which you will perceive on reference to the tables, that, owing to the great disparity between adults and children, nearly four to one, the tribes in this district must surely decrease more and more rapidly year by year. I find that comparatively few children are born, and that of those few a great number die at one and two years of age.

I have, &c.,

JAMES BOOTH, R.M.

The Under-Secretary Native Department, Wellington.

No. 15.

Mr. R. WARD, R.M., Marton, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Resident Magistrate's Office, Marton, 30th April, 1881.

I have the honor, in compliance with your Circular Letter No. 14, dated the 9th February last, to forward herewith a census taken of the Maoris in my district, from Marton to Waikanae and its surroundings. I find on the 4th instant there was a Maori population in the district of 1,321 persons. I observe that in the year 1878 the census taken for the same district showed a population of 1,538, thus leaving a decrease of 217. I account for this as representing what I believe to be the number who have temporarily left this part of the North Island and were attending some sittings of the Native Land Court at Cambridge, and others who are visiting at Taupo. I believe the population to be just as it was three years ago. Many of the older people have died, but I think the young children quite keep up the number. I am glad to be able to report that no epidemic has visited them since the last census was taken. In fact, on the whole, I believe the Maoris in my district are healthier than they were : they are steadier in their habits, work harder, and are better clothed and fed. I have noticed an improvement in their dwelling-houses, and, being brought continually in contact with their European neighbours, they are to a great extent abandoning their Maori habits and customs, and assuming those of the *Pakeha*. I find, as a rule, those Natives who have to work hard for their money, and so know its value, are not so ready to spend it for strong drink.

I am disposed to think that the great commercial depression this colony has been subjected to, and which has to a certain extent affected the Maoris, has caused them to "turn to" and work for their living, and with most beneficial results as to their habits and health. The fact of the Maori parents being healthier has its good effect on the children who are born to them. I think there are signs of improvement in the religious condition of the Maoris. I am informed that since the last census was taken the Church of England, the Wesleyan Methodists, and the Lutheran Church have been stirring