

No. 7.

Mr. H. W. BRABANT, R.M., Tauranga, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Tauranga, 3rd May, 1886.

In accordance with the instructions contained in your circular-letter of the 30th December last, I have the honour to transmit herewith a compiled census of the Maori population of the County of Tauranga and adjacent islands, including half-castes living as Maoris. In comparing this census with previous ones, it is necessary first to point out that the tract of country between the eastern boundary of Tauranga County and the Tarawera River which was included in my census returns for 1881, and which then contained 378 Maoris, has on the present occasion been thrown into the next district. The present census as compared with that of 1881 shows as follows :—

—	1881.	1886.	Increase.	Decrease.
Tauranga District, comprising the Ridings of Katikati and Waimapu, the Borough of Tauranga, and Mayor Island	1,020	963	..	57
Riding of Maketu	384	387	3	..
Riding of Rotorua	1,375	1,377	2	..
Island of Motiti	109	91	..	18
Total	2,888	2,818	5	75

In comparing these returns, however, it must not be forgotten that the Natives frequently move from one district to another. Some of the Rotorua Natives will appear in the Taupo return where they were attending a Land Court. Some fifteen Natives who resided at Tauranga in 1881 are now at Te Awahou, Rotorua; also a few of those who were at Motiti in 1881 are now at Maketu. My Tauranga Sub-enumerator reports that about thirty of the Tauranga Natives were at the time of the census absent, gum-digging.

Taking these circumstances into consideration, I estimate the decrease in population of the whole district in the five years at about 1·25 per cent.

During the last few years the general state of health of the Maoris in the district has appeared good, the deaths being generally those of children and old people. The adults who die early generally, I think, suffer from lung complaints. Low fever has been known to exist from time to time at some of the settlements, and has been fatal to some of the children. Whooping-cough has also been prevalent, but this appears not to affect them seriously.

My Sub-enumerators obtained but little co-operation from the Natives in taking the census, while, on the other hand, with the exception of one hapu, no active opposition was experienced.

As regards population, I think the returns are as correct as it is possible to make them; but the amount of crops is, in general, a mere estimate, as the Natives (even if they were anxious to assist, which they are not) can form a very imperfect idea of the extent of their cultivations; and it would be impossible, without a large expenditure of time and money, to measure them.

I have felt some difficulty as to whether the crops should be returned as “individual cultivation” or “common cultivation,” as the custom appears not to be strictly the one or the other.

Families and relatives have their cultivations in common; but the Sub-enumerators did not report any instance when the crops were common to the hapu, and they have therefore been entered as individual cultivation.

I have, &c.,

HERBERT W. BRABANT,
Resident Magistrate.

The Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

No. 8.

Mr. R. S. BUSH, B.M., Opotiki, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department.

Memorandum on Census Return.

It will be observed that the total Native population in the Opotiki District, which consists of the whole of the Whakatane County, numbers 3,951; besides this, 126 persons connected with the district were absent, many of these temporarily, kauri gum-digging and visiting in other parts of the Island; a few, however, though interested in lands here, appear to have permanent abodes elsewhere. The number 3,951 is in excess of the total of 1881 (which was 3,631) by 320; this excess, however, is made up of Natives included in the Maketu District return of 1881, viz., those at Matata, Umuhika, and Te Onepu, numbering in all 313, leaving only an increase of 7.

In 1881, for convenience' sake, all the Natives in and about Waikaremoana were shown in the Wairoa District returns. This year all those residing in that locality within the limits of this county, amounting to 52, are included in this return; we therefore have an apparent increase of 57; but when it is considered that out of the 126 absentees some 70 are permanent residents