

1901.
NEW ZEALAND.

CENSUS OF THE MAORI POPULATION

(PAPERS RELATING TO).

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

MEMORANDUM for the Hon. the NATIVE MINISTER.

I HAVE the honour to lay before you the preliminary results of the census of the Native population, which was taken during the month of February last. It is not possible to take the Maori census in one night, as is done in the case of the European census, nor is the same degree of accuracy to be expected in the enumeration; but I believe the work has been done as thoroughly as circumstances would permit. The total Maori population amounted to 43,101 persons, an increase for the five years of 3,247 persons.

For the purpose of taking the Maori census, districts are formed, consisting of groups of contiguous counties, and for each district an Enumerator—in all cases but one a Government officer—is appointed. The Enumerators employ a sufficient number of sub-enumerators, whose duties are to visit all the Maori settlements in their sub-districts, and record the names, ages, and sexes of the inhabitants thereof, together with particulars of the tribes they belong to, and of their crops and live-stock. The Enumerator then makes up a summary for the whole of his district, and from these summaries the preliminary results given in this paper are compiled. Later on, the Registrar-General will compile from the sub-enumerators' books the detailed particulars which will appear in the volume of census results. It will therefore be understood that the figures now given are liable to readjustment, being only the first rough results taken from the Enumerators' summaries.

The first Native census was taken in the year 1874, but in 1867, and again in 1871, the various officers residing in Native districts had been instructed to furnish estimates of the number of Maoris in their respective districts. These estimates were, however, admittedly merely approximate, and must be regarded as imperfect. Since 1874 a census of the Native population has been taken coincidently with the European census. The following table shows the population at these respective periods:—

				Persons.	Increase.	Decrease
1867	(approximate estimate)	...	...	38,540	...	...
1871	"	...	...	37,502	...	...
1874	(first census)	...	...	45,470	...	...
1878	...	...	...	43,595	...	1,875
1881	...	...	...	44,097	502	...
1886	...	...	...	41,969	...	2,128
1891	...	...	...	41,993	24	...
1896	...	...	...	39,854	...	2,139
1901	...	...	...	43,101	3,247	...

The fluctuations exhibited in the above table cannot be regarded as normal, and conclusions deduced from the figures must be regarded to a large degree, as conjectural. It was doubted whether the large decrease shown by the census of 1896 was a real decrease, or merely due to the non-inclusion of a number of Natives either by accident or through refusals to give proper information to the sub-enumerators. Similarly the large increase shown by the present census may, in part, be attributed to more favourable circumstances permitting a closer enumeration to be made on this occasion.

It is obvious that any real increase in the Maori population must arise from an excess of births over deaths—in other words, the Maoris must reproduce themselves, as, unlike the European population, they cannot be recruited from outside. It is therefore necessary to ascertain