

At the present time 1,098 Maoris are in receipt of old-age pensions. In the report of Mr. Blomfield, S.M., the Enumerator for the Bay of Islands and Hokianga District, it is stated that the pensioners do not get the full benefit of the pension, which is taken by their younger relations and spent. Mr. Blomfield's remarks confirm the views that have been expressed by others in a position to judge—viz., that a small grant from the Civil List expended in the purchase of rations is much more beneficial to aged and indigent Natives than any grant of money. A large number of Maoris are in receipt of rations supplied by local storekeepers in the shape of flour, sugar, tea, bread, tobacco, &c., and supervised as far as possible by some local officer. Each individual application is scrutinised as closely as circumstances will permit, and though doubtless assistance is occasionally obtained on insufficient or unworthy grounds, on the other hand it may be safely asserted that the sufferings of old age, infirmity, and poverty are alleviated at a comparatively small expense, and that no really deserving case is allowed to go unrelieved.

The reports of the Enumerators and Sub-enumerators attached hereto, contain much of interest. Crime does not prevail in any marked degree. The Natives as a whole are becoming more and more temperate every year. The drunken orgies that were once common are in a great measure things of the past. In several of the reports reference is made to their adoption of the European style of living; some are sheep-farmers, others cultivate their land, while others again engage in various forms of remunerative labour. Every year the spread of settlement brings them into closer touch with their pakeha neighbours, and subjects them to the influence of European example. Their ultimate destiny must remain a matter of speculation. The pessimist sees a remnant of beggars wandering over the land their ancestors once possessed, while the optimist looks forward to a complete fusion of the two races. Whatever the outcome may be the Maori will always remain a picturesque and romantic figure in New Zealand history. In earlier times he both fought and cultivated. Happily the occupation of the warrior has passed away, but the gentle arts of peace still remain. Every well-wisher of the Maori must hope that he will remember the proverb of his own race, "Ehara te toa taua, he toa pahekeheke: Ka pa tau he toa ngaki kai, e kore e paheke,"—the fame of the warrior is shortlived, but the fame of the man strong to cultivate is everlasting.

F. WALDEGRAVE, Under-Secretary.

Wellington, 1st June, 1901.

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