

majority refuse to go to the hospital. Many lives are lost which might have been saved. The only scheme to give much relief is a system of Maori cottage hospitals with Maori nurses. From these as centres practical teaching in hygiene, care of the sick, cooking of invalid-foods, and care of infants may be taught. To the Maori an ounce of practice is worth a pound of theory. In the case of children, nurses will be able to teach better than medical men. A system should be tried where every child born should be notified, and the mother visited and instructed by the local nurse. Invaluable benefit will be conferred upon the race by directing attention to the children in the way that Dr. King is doing in Dunedin. I hope that Hospital Boards are meeting the wishes of the Government, and that Maori nurses will soon be available.

PETER HENRY BUCK, M.B., Ch.B.,
Native Health Officer.

Dr. Pomare.

Ruatoki, 20th February, 1906.

HEREIN are contained a few notes anent the Matatua Maori District, its people and villages.

In regard to the general attitude of the Natives towards the efforts made to induce them to improve their houses, &c., I may say that the majority of them quite agree that such improvements are desirable and beneficial, also that they are quite willing to build better dwelling-places, &c., as they can afford it.

Exceptions to the above there are. The Ngatiwhare people of Te Whaiti I have been quite unable to move from their state of apathy reported by me the year before last. Ngatimanawa of Whirinaki have ever been inimical to the Matatua Maori Council and to any advice tendered them in respect to their villages, &c. These two hapus need to be waked up a little. The Ngamaihi people of Te Teko are also very backward, as also are Ngaiteriu of Te Kautawhero, at Ruatahuna. The most deplorable and backward places (kainga) within the Matatua District are Te Kautawhero, Te Murumurunga, at Te Whaiti; and Hekerangi at Te Teko.

On the other hand, however, there are a good many kainga where the people have much improved their dwellings and surroundings. Foremost among them is Pupuaruhe, near Whakatane, where all the people dwell in small weatherboard cottages; Tanarau, at Ruatoki, where but one *whare maori* remains, and there are eleven wooden cottages. Other creditable villages are Waikirikiri, Te Houhi, Te Whareotoroa, Te Pahou, Te Poroporo, and Otamauru. The Whakatohea villages are very fair on the whole, the most backward being Te Rere, at Opotiki. Most of the Ngatiawa kainga are creditable, save Hekerangi. Generally speaking the water-supply is good; the worst is that of Otamauru, which is emphatically bad. These people should obtain some tanks to conserve rain-water, as they inform me that the water obtained by well-sinking is very bad.

During the month of January I visited all the Whakatohea, Ngatiawa, and Ngatipukeko kainga, from Opape to Te Teko, interviewing the Komiti Marae at each place, and explaining what matters they should take in hand to improve the various places. I have visited all settlements save the two at Waikaremoana. I intended to have gone here during the present month, but found that funds available would not permit of it.

In regard to the Urewera villages, those of Waimana, Ruatoki, and Te Houhi divisions are certainly creditable, while those of Ruatahuna and Maungapohatu are about as good as can be expected when one remembers their isolation and the poverty of the people.

The following is in reply to circular of the 8th January, 1906: Number of kaingas visited, 49; number of houses inspected, 468; number of houses condemned, 24; number of houses destroyed, 13; number of houses erected, 42; number of closets built, 0. Cooking-sheds are not included in the above.

Latrines.—In regard to latrines: There are two most difficult and unsatisfactory matters to deal with in this district—viz., latrines and tohungas. They should be bracketed together. Out of forty-nine kaingas visited by me only three have these necessary outhouses. The modern Maori strongly objects to them, albeit his ancestors were much more sensible. No notice has been taken of my repeated remarks on this subject. Any objection as to the cost is quite beside the mark, as very good ones may be constructed of raupo, split timber, &c. But the people object to them. That is the truth. When preparing for the meeting at Ruatoki in 1904, I had the greatest difficulty in getting the necessary *paepae* erected; and three out of the four put up do not appear to have been utilised since. As to your remarks *re* prosecuting Natives who refuse to erect the useful *paepae*, I explained this at every place I visited in three trips made in January and February so as to warn the Natives. I would propose taking the local people first—i.e., those of Ruatoki—and give them a certain time wherein to erect *paepae*. Then, if they neglect to do so, bring an action against one person, as a commencement, to see how the case goes.

In regard to the general sanitation of the various kaingas, no matter how clean a village and its tenements are kept, one cannot speak well of such places so long as all surrounding lands are covered with human excreta, even such portions thereof as form the catchment-area of streams from which water is drawn for domestic purposes. Apart from this, some improvement has been observed in some parts; but the Komiti Marae, I find, are not to be depended upon to work any reform in sanitary matters. The European must take the matter in hand and insist upon a change being made.

Food.—In regard to food-supplies: In the interior the people live practically upon potatoes, very often without any addition thereto save a little puwha, or the undeveloped fronds of *Asplenium bulbiferum*. These inland people are also addicted to the use of potatoes which have been immersed in stagnant water until rotten. No more repulsive food can be imagined, but these Natives devour it with avidity. Rotten corn and "turned" meat also find an honoured place on the tribal menu. And skin-diseases are ever present.