

collected by Dr. Shortland in 1844, while engaged in the South with Colonel Godfrey investigating land claims, and from other sources, the aggregate Native population of the South Island at that date approximated 3,000, and the half-caste population were estimated at 100.

Assuming that the foregoing enumeration is correct, and there appears no reason to doubt it, as the numbers were confirmed by subsequent computations, it will be seen by the present census that the Native population has diminished nearly one-half in thirty years, while the mixed race during the same time has increased over sevenfold.

It is generally understood by students of ethnology that sexual unions between individuals belonging to different varieties of the human race are in general prolific; and not only so, but that their offspring are in general prolific. It is also known that in many parts of the world the mixed race are a rapidly increasing people, especially in some of the West India Islands, where it is probable they might eventually become the permanent masters of the place, were it not for the great numerical superiority of the genuine negroes.

In New Zealand we have not only the European and Maori mingling their blood, but the Maori and the half-caste, the half-caste and the half-caste, and the offspring of each of these with the offspring of the other, or with members of either of the parent stock. In all of these cases the union is usually prolific, but unions between the pure Maori are rarely so.

It is generally advanced by authorities on the subject, that it is impossible to determine how far the mixed coloured race is capable of permanency, either by the development of a fixed type or by continuous fertility until the predominant primary type reasserts its powers, by their return to that of the original white or black parent.

Through these half-bred descendants the Maori may yet continue to possess the reserves set apart for him, but he himself is fast disappearing, and may eventually disappear altogether before the advance of civilization.

This general decline is not merely confined to the New Zealanders, but is universal wherever the Polynesian race is found, owing to their utter disregard of all those social and sanitary conditions which are essential to the continuing vitality of the human race.

Writers on the causes which limit population have divided the checks to increase into two, the preventive and the positive: the first are those which limit fecundity; the second those which decrease longevity. The first diminish the number of births; the second increase the number of deaths. The positive check to population is physical evil. The preventive checks are promiscuous intercourse and abstinence from marriage.

Of the positive checks to increase that exist amongst the Natives, is the want of fecundity amongst the females in cases where they cohabit with or are married to males of their own race; another cause is living in unwholesome dwellings. The mortality caused amongst the children by improper or insufficient food is another; others are the want of sufficient food or clothing by persons of all ages. The former is one of the chief causes which operate unfavourably against a people like the Maoris, who depend principally for subsistence on that which is most easily obtained, and consequently suffer through the variations of the seasons.

One of the most wasting causes of depopulation amongst the southern tribes in former years was the predatory incursions they suffered from the northern tribes under Te Rauparaha; but nearly half a century has passed now since they were subject to these attacks, a sufficient length of time for them to have recovered from the ill effects.

The introduction of the measles and other European maladies caused a great mortality amongst the people prior to the foundation of the Colony. The introduction also of new habits amongst them by the whalers, and the adoption of new kinds of animal food, together with the use of raw spirits, and the change of clothing, are assigned as past causes of the rapid disappearance of the Native race.

In considering the preventive checks to population—promiscuous intercourse, and abstinence from marriage,—as a general rule there are scarcely any females whose fecundity is prevented or diminished by promiscuous intercourse, excepting the class of females whose only trade is prostitution, and they form so small a proportion of the whole community that the check to population occasioned by their infertility may be disregarded. The prudential checks which operate against sexual unions amongst civilized communities have no weight amongst the Natives, nor is population much retarded by the fear of wanting mere necessities, this being a matter of familiar occurrence to which they have been accustomed from their childhood.

In the absence of any system of registration of births and deaths amongst the Natives, it is impossible to calculate the average annual mortality, as many of the children die without record being kept of their decease. From the best information obtainable, the number of children born during the past six years amongst the Natives in the South, where the largest mixed population reside, was 145, and the number of deaths amongst persons of all ages was 138. Some of the deaths were caused by a type of low fever that prevailed at a few of the settlements about the latter end of last year. I have no record of what has taken place in Canterbury during the same period. In Marlborough the number of births during the time was 46, and the number of deaths 33; this shows a slight increase, which may be attributed to the presence of a mixed race.

In Nelson the number of births was 45, and the number of deaths 63; here the deaths preponderate; this is partly accounted for by the total absence of births in one district where 13 deaths occurred. In other places the majority of deaths were those of aged persons; a few were the result of accident, and one was caused by suicide.

In reviewing the whole question, the largest diminution amongst the population has taken place in the southern provinces; their former number, according to the census of 1844, was 1,900, against a present population of 944. In the northern part of the island, and the West Coast, the estimated number in 1844 was 1,100, and the present number is 867, showing a decrease of 233. The decrease in the population at this end of the island has been caused to a great extent by removals to the North. In 1860 the whole of the Ngatirahiri Tribe, formerly residing at Anakiwa, left Queen Charlotte Sound for Taranaki, and since then members of other tribes have migrated from this province. In the South th