

TOTAL of BIRTHS and DEATHS of NATIVES within the District of Mangonui for period of two years prior to the 31st December, 1879.

Period.	Births.	Deaths.	Excess of Births over Deaths.
1st January to 31st December, 1878	56	51	5
1st January to 31st December, 1879	57	49	8
Total	113	100	13

NATIVE CENSUS, DISTRICT OF MANGONUI.

Date when taken.	Total.	Increase.	Decrease.
June quarter, 1874	2,071
December quarter, 1877	1,732	Nil	339
December quarter, 1879, reckoning excess of births over deaths, shows a population of	1,745	13	Nil.

I have, &c.,
GEO. KELLY,

The Hon. the Native Minister, Wellington.

Officer in Charge of District.

No. 3.

Mr. VON STÜRMER, R.M., Hokianga, to the UNDER SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Resident Magistrate's Office, Hokianga, 7th May, 1880.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your Circular No. 1, of 16th March, 1880, requesting me to forward my annual report on the state of the Natives in this district, and beg to forward the report required herewith.

There has during the past year been perhaps more visible change in the Natives in this district than has been observable for many years past. I am sorry to state that in September last a serious breach of the peace between two hapus of the Ngapuhi, in which several lives were lost, occurred in the bush near Otatau. The ostensible cause of the quarrel was the survey of land, the boundary-lines of which the Ngaitu insisted upon cutting, and which the Ngaitewake endeavoured forcibly to prevent. Both parties appeared on the ground armed, and came into collision, when a sharp conflict ensued, two on one side and three on the other being killed outright, and several wounded, who have since recovered. By the speedy intervention of Maihi Paraone Kawiti, Kerei Mongonui, Hone Mohi Tawhai, and other influential chiefs, this quarrel, which at first threatened to spread through the various hapus, was finally settled, the disputed land being handed to Maihi Paraone Kawiti, and the peace of the district, which was so seriously endangered, secured. For further particulars on this subject, I would refer you to my report No. 35-79, of the 3rd October, 1879.

Latterly, the Natives have taken a great interest in politics, and, within the last few months, held several large meetings, at which they have fully discussed the present state of affairs in the South, the Native Land Act in all its bearings, and the Treaty of Waitangi, together with other matters relating to themselves; and appear to be watching the course of events with a considerable amount of interest. A feeling of sullenness and distrust of Europeans appears to be spreading amongst them, which may in a measure be accounted for, or occasioned by, a knowledge that their former power and influence as a people is rapidly passing away, seeing, as they do, the steady increase in numbers and prosperity of the Europeans around them, and their own falling-off both in numbers and territorial wealth. And some of the leading men amongst them have openly said that they would do their utmost to prevent any more lands being sold, either to the Government or to private purchasers. Still, with all this, they are as amenable to the law as they have ever been, and give but comparatively little trouble.

Physically, I cannot report favourably. The health of the people during the past year has been very bad, and a considerable number of children and young people have died, more particularly in the neighbourhood of the Rarawa settlements at Lower Waihou, where, during September and October, upwards of twenty children were carried off by low fever, and doubtless many others would have succumbed to the malady but for the timely arrival of medical aid and comforts, supplied to them by the Government. I may state that these attacks of fever, which always appear amongst the Natives in the spring of the year, may be in a great measure attributed to the scarcity and bad quality of the food to which they are at this season reduced, owing to their winter supplies having been consumed, through their want of care and general improvidence, and also to their laziness and want of energy in taking the proper steps to meet the difficulty. The want of proper ventilation in their houses, they being small, damp, and overcrowded, and the absence of ordinary cleanliness in their persons, is also another cause of disease; and I much fear but little good can be effected for their benefit until they themselves are fully alive to the importance of some radical change in their habits and mode of living.

During the year a large number of the people have been engaged road-making for the County Council, and also in digging kauri gum: at the latter occupation they have realized large sums of money, a single individual in many instances earning as much as £6 and £8 sterling per week. I am glad to be able to state that drinking has not been nearly so prevalent as formerly, and that their earnings are expended principally in good clothing and other necessary articles, though they are still very reckless and improvident, and do not appear to understand the value of money, or make any kind of provision for the future.

The crops have been good, but not beyond the average of former years; but the supplies stored for winter use are not large, as a very large quantity of the kumaras, potatoes, and pork raised has been consumed, or rather wasted, at the numerous meetings held in this district of late. I observe that in several of the settlements large patches of tobacco have been planted and have been a great success, and the use of the imported article is being superseded by that of their own manufacture. This is more particularly noticeable in the settlements on the Mangamuka and the Upper Waihou Rivers.