

No. 10.

Mr. W. J. BUTLER, Land-purchase Officer, Wanganui, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Wanganui, 11th May, 1891.

I have the honour to forward by to-day's mail the census returns of the Maori population of Wanganui and Waitotara Counties, together with the returns collected by my sub-enumerator in the West Clifton County. The latter are contained in two books, marked "West Clifton" on the outside, and should be compared with the returns sent in by the enumerator for that district in order to avoid duplication.

I regret to report that, at several of the settlements in the Wanganui County, all information was refused the sub-enumerator. I am, therefore, in a position to furnish an approximate estimate only of the population of those places. The total number of the Maori population in the Wanganui County is 1,057, and 201 in Waitotara County. This shows a diminution of seventy-five in the Wanganui County since the last census was taken in 1886; but there is a more than corresponding increase in the population of Waitotara; and, as the Wanganui River is the boundary between the two counties, it may fairly be assumed that there is a slight increase in the total population, the reduction in the numbers in the Wanganui County being accounted for by their having moved across to the Waitotara side of the river.

The health of the Natives in my districts has been fairly good. They have not been visited by any epidemic or serious diseases. On the Wanganui River, from Pipiriki downwards, there is an evident desire to improve their social and sanitary condition; but in the more remote settlements their mode of life is most unsatisfactory, and it is a matter for surprise that the mortality among them is not much greater than it is.

I have, &c.,

The Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

W. J. BUTLER.

No. 11.

Mr. H. W. BRABANT, R.M., Wanganui, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Resident Magistrate's Office, Wanganui, 19th May, 1891.

Referring to your Circular No. 12, of the 8th December, 1890, I have the honour to inform you that I forwarded to you yesterday a summary of the Native population in the Rangitikei, Manawatu, Oroua, and Horowhenua Counties. This census has been carefully taken under my direction by sub-enumerators well acquainted with their respective districts, and may, I think, be relied on for approximate accuracy as regards the Native population. Speaking generally, very little assistance was given by the Natives themselves; indeed, in several cases, they positively refused information, which was, however, eventually obtained by quiet persistence.

The amount of crops, &c., is necessarily in many cases merely the sub-enumerators' estimate.

The Natives have not, as far as I am aware, been visited by any special disease or epidemic. They appear to enjoy a fair amount of health and prosperity. In some cases they have valuable farms and stock, and enjoy rents from lands leased to Europeans.

It will be observed that the district (four counties) shows a decrease of eleven souls since last census in 1886, and the actual falling-off is larger, as twenty-four taken at Marton were strangers attending the Native Land Court. I have not any such intimate acquaintance with the Natives in this district as would enable me to give an opinion as to the cause of this decrease; but I am informed by my sub-enumerators that a considerable number of Natives have changed their residences since last census, moving from one county to another, and in some instances leaving the district. The net decrease is from all causes about 2½ per cent.

I am glad to report that the moral condition of the Natives has considerably improved of late years.

I have, &c.,

HERBERT W. BRABANT, R.M.

The Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

No. 12.

W. RENNELL, Esq., Reserves Trustee, New Plymouth, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

New Plymouth, 11th April, 1891.

I have the honour, as instructed by your letter of the 8th December last, to report to you that I have compiled the Maori census for the Patea, Hawera, Stratford, Taranaki and Clifton Counties, excepting the inland boundaries, and for these localities you will receive information from Mr. G. T. Wilkinson, of Waikato, and Mr. W. J. Butler, of Wellington, these gentlemen having kindly undertaken to collect the census of Maoris living in places where they could not easily be reached from the seaward part of my district. I have also collected for Mr. Wilkinson a few names, &c., of Natives that could be easier got at by me than by him.

I shall have to ask you to be good enough, when these gentlemen's returns reach you, to cause their totals of Natives in my counties to be added to my totals herewith sent. Until this is done no comparison between last and present census can be made; but I believe, and have always been of opinion, that the Natives in my district are decreasing steadily in numbers, through excessive mortality and paucity of births. One of my sub-enumerators gave it as his opinion that not more than one of three Maori children live to maturity. I do not think this an exaggeration.

There has been no severe sickness or epidemic in this district since last census.