

to that effect when their land was ceded, are maintained by their relatives, which has the effect of keeping them all in poor circumstances.

The half-caste population in Southland complained that the land allotted to them by the Government—viz., 10 acres for each male, and 8 acres for each female, was altogether inadequate. In nearly all cases they had large families to support, and, in addition to that, they had also to maintain others who were incapable of earning a living.

Another drawback was owing to a great deal of the land that had been allotted them being situated in out-of-the-way localities, where it was impossible to obtain labour to assist in supporting their families. The result of this was that the concession made to them in regard to this land was of little or no benefit, and they strongly urged that Government would take their case into consideration, and allot them more suitable-sized areas commensurate with their requirements.

Reference to the census recently taken will show that the Natives in the southern provinces compared with their numbers have very little land under cultivation, nor do they possess many head of stock. The population residing in the aforesaid provinces numbers 1,095, and the acreage under crop is 1,047 acres. The stock of all kind owned by these people is 1,194 head—namely, 604 sheep, 513 cattle, and 77 pigs.

It will be observed from these figures that the people cannot be considered to be in a thriving condition under these circumstances. They state, as a reason for not displaying more energy in industrial pursuits, that they experience so many difficulties in raising crops that they have grown disheartened, and only cultivate barely sufficient for their own wants. They also find that the small areas they possess preclude the possibility of raising stock. Even at Waikouaiti, where the Natives possessed a good many sheep in former years, they have had to get rid of them, owing to the land having been cut up into small sections.

As regards those who have no land for their maintenance, it is found on inquiry that there are a large number in that position, and for the purpose of ascertaining this information a list of names of all the Native population, inclusive of half-castes or quarter-castes residing amongst the Europeans, has been prepared.

The whole of the population have been divided into three classes—viz., (a) The unprovided; (b) the insufficiently provided, being all who do not possess more than 50 acres; and (c) Those who possess over 50 acres. Schedules F, G, and H, attached, contain the requisite details.

The number of persons included in Schedule F is 721\* of all ages—viz., 363 males and 358 females, comprising 368 Maoris, 207 half-castes, and 146 quarter-castes, being the children of either a European father or mother and half-castes. The children of Maori and half-caste parents are ranked as Maoris.

The object in including all the descendants of the Natives, irrespective of whether such persons were living amongst the European community or not, was to make the return as full as possible, leaving the question as to whether some of these persons were entitled to consideration to be afterwards decided. In some cases the European fathers are fairly well off, and able to provide for their families, but this is a mere accident, which probably may be unnecessary to consider in dealing with the question on general terms.

The return of persons unprovided with land contains the names of 48 parents who have families ranging from one to thirteen, aggregating a total of 214 persons whose names do not appear in detail.

According to the census of 1891 the Native population residing in the Provincial Districts of Canterbury and Otago, inclusive of Stewart Island and Ruapuke, only number 1,231. This computation, however, only includes the Natives and half-castes residing at the Native settlements, but the enumeration made in connection with the present inquiry embraces all the Native population together with their descendants irrespective of the degree of consanguinity, whose progenitors formerly owned the tracts of country comprised within the several purchasers that formed the subject of the present inquiry.

I have not made any recommendation as to the quantity of land to be allotted to the persons included in Schedule F, as this duty is not required of me.

As regards the condition of the Natives, although none of them are in a thriving condition, there are fewer cases of actual pauperism than might be expected considering the limited area of land under cultivation by them.

The people residing at the Taiari are in the poorest plight of any of the Native communities. This is owing to a great extent to the limited quantity of suitable land for cropping, a large proportion of the Taiari Reserve being altogether unsuitable for any but pastoral purposes.

At Te Karoro the Natives are also in a very backward condition; no attempt is made to advance themselves; the same listlessness that prevailed formerly still actuates them. The reserve consists chiefly of hill-side of second-class land, covered with heavy bush, only a small area of which has been recovered from its primeval condition, and there appears no disposition on the part of the owners to improve it. At a number of the other settlements the Natives exist to a great extent on the credit obtainable from the tradesmen, and if that was stopped many of them would be reduced to pauperism.

Considering the slender means of existence that many of the Natives possess, it is amazing to note how it is possible for them to appear so decently clad, or that under the circumstances sufficient food can be found for their subsistence.

It is proposed to furnish the Native Department with a list of the persons who require charitable assistance.

#### OTAKOU BLOCK.

The questions referred under the Commission are as follows: (1.) What descendants of the Native vendors are now living? (2.) What land and means of support have they at present? (3.)

\*Since Schedule F was prepared forty-two have been eliminated, and placed in the other Schedules.