

I found very little cultivation throughout my district, as the Natives occupy the most of their time in digging gum. They prefer to purchase all their stores in lieu of cultivating, as last year all their crops failed through the potato-blight.

The Natives in my district appear to be in good health, with the exception of some few cases of influenza—not serious.

Mr. G. G. Paul, sub-enumerator for Thames County, states,—

I beg to report that nearly all the Maoris from Waiwarawara, near Miranda, thence along to Waitakaruru, as well as those camping about the Piako River, are engaged chiefly in cutting flax, and have paid little or no heed to the cultivation of crops. What little cultivations I saw are shown in the returns, and are really the labours of those who are left at home, and who are not able to cut flax or participate in other manual labour.

At Turua the Maoris are engaged, some at the sawmill and others in the bush.

There are very few Maoris in the Thames proper. There are a few round about the suburbs, and their cultivations are shown.

Puketaiko and other places round about that locality are gum-diggers' camps, occupied principally by Te Arawa Tribe. They have their cultivations at Taungatara (about 20 acres), and at Paritu (15 acres). Most of the Maoris about this part of the district are employed in digging for gum nearly all the year round.

Taking the district as a whole, the crops are better than last year, and pretty free of the blight. The extent of cultivation is small, owing to the scarcity of seeds.

During the whole of my journey through the different settlements I never saw any signs of disease, nor heard of any epidemics, and, but for a slight visitation of the influenza, which removed a few of the Maoris about Taungatara, I am of opinion that the condition of the Maoris about here is good.

Although my return shows a small decrease, yet, had it not been for the general rush to the new gum-land at Mercury Bay, I am certain my return would have shown a large increase.

The state of the Maoris generally in this district, taking it as a whole, is good. The flax industry has been a boon for a great many of them—at any rate, it gives them employment.

Mr. Maaka P. Patena, sub-enumerator for Ohinemuri County, states,—

I found that the people were very inquisitive as to the nature of my mission, and whether it had been approved by Mahuta. When they were satisfied with my answers, they were quite willing to give information. In regard to potatoes, the yield was fair, but rotted before they got it to their store-pits. The maize and oats were poor, although the Natives do not know the cause. Judging by appearances I think it was due to frost.

Mr. R. B. Gerring, sub-enumerator for Piako County and part of Waikato County, states,—

I have much pleasure in stating that the general health of the Maoris in my district is very good. In all the places visited by me I saw only one case of sickness—at the Morrinsville flax-mill—and the man looked to me to have been overworked. In no other place did I see any one ailing, with the exception of one or two cases of colds. I particularly inquired as to the state of health for some months back, but was everywhere informed that there had been no epidemic or sickness for some considerable time past. In all my round I found the greatest willingness on the part of the Natives to give the required information, and in no case was the slightest objection made after I had stated my mission. Of course, there were always the usual questions as to why particulars were wanted, &c., but, after briefly explaining matters, the work went on without any discussion.

The aspect of the kaingas is about the same as on my last round of census work. In some cases the whares were a little better, but in all places there was the same old-time appearance. There was no newness nor sign of particular care about their dwelling-places, but, on the whole, there was a slightly better appearance.

I was requested to draw your attention to the action of rabbit-poisoners at Okauia and Whakaaratamaiti, where pigs and other animals had been poisoned. (Noted in returns: 11 breeding-sows, 33 suckers, 14 pigs, 6 head of cattle, and 1 horse.) I was assured by the owners that they protested against poison being laid so close to their kaingas, but the rabbit would not pay the slightest attention to their protest. Thus they lost pigs and cattle and got no *utu*.

In many cases I was asked to grant pensions to the old people. When I explained that I could not do so, and told them what steps would have to be taken to obtain a pension, the general answer was, "How are we to obtain pensions under those conditions? We shall have to go without. What is the good of such a pension?"

Mr. B. W. Marshall, sub-enumerator for part of Waikato County and part of Raglan County, states,—

The Maori people in this district are very scattered. They have left their proper kaingas where they might have houses to live in, and are dotted about all over the place. Their principal occupations are flax-cutting, gum-digging, bush and scrub cutting, draining, and working at flax-mills. The real cause of their having become so scattered is the fact that their crops have been nearly all destroyed by the blight. The potato is the staple food of the Maoris. Now that the potato-crop has been a failure, they have to do something by which to gain a living. I have never seen them so scattered. They are living in tents, which are not very nice houses for winter weather.

Some of the Maoris are improving—the half-castes especially—by working more into Europeans' ways. Some very nice little cottages have been built since I took the last census. Some of the people are improving and some are at a standstill.

The Maoris in this district are a healthy race of people, there being no disease amongst them. During my travels I only heard of two cases of indisposition, and those, I think, were only colds.