

12. MARLBOROUGH AND SOUNDS.

SIR,—

Havelock, Marlborough, 28th August, 1906.

I beg to advise having forwarded you, under separate cover, the details of population of Natives in the Marlborough and Sounds Counties, and enclose the summary herewith.

There is little to report on the condition of the Natives in the portion of Marlborough and Sounds set forth. The Natives are practically Europeanised, and the majority speak English with fluency. They reside in dwellings equal in comfort to the usual country settler, have adopted European customs, are prosperous, and appear fully and cheerfully occupied in improving their holdings for agricultural and pastoral purposes—sheep-farming predominating. Those not in actual pursuit of these vocations find employment as labourers, and there is no indication of retrogression or want of stamina.

The children are in the habit of attending school with regularity, and are apparently robust in health.

For the convenience of Natives visiting Havelock, a Maori Hostelry has recently been erected in that township by the Public Trustee's Department. The hostelry (containing three rooms, two of which are fitted with sleeping "bunks" and the third with fireplace) is frequently occupied, and has removed the difficulty previously felt of visiting Natives obtaining accommodation.

Inquiries in regard to the ravages of the potato-blight show that the crop has not been materially affected thereby.

I am, &c.,

The Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

R. STANSFIELD.

13. CANTERBURY.

SIR,—

Magistrate's Office, Christchurch, 7th May, 1906.

I have the honour to forward you herewith the result of the census recently taken by me of the Maori population in that portion of the South Island, including Stewart and adjacent islands, allotted to me.

By comparison with the returns of 1901 you will notice that, whereas in that year there were returned 1,103 Maoris, there are now 1,147. Although I do not place much reliance upon the correctness of the Maori census as usually taken, I believe these figures are fairly correct, and are certainly satisfactory as showing that that steady decrease that was so deplorable for many years has certainly been arrested for the present. I do not, however, consider that the returns of half-castes are in any way satisfactory. In 1896 they were returned at 871; in 1901 as 446, and this year as 818. The real fact of the matter is that as a rule the sub-enumerators show no discretion in separating the half-castes who are living as members of Native tribes from those who are to all intents and purposes living on exactly the same footing as the pakeha. In my opinion, of all the half-castes returned in this summary, not twenty-five per cent. can be truly said to be living as members of tribes. I have no means, of course, of checking the accuracy of the returns in this respect, and I therefore send them forward as furnished to me. As suggested by you, I utilised as far as possible the services of the officials of the Maori Councils. Where suitable I employed them as sub-enumerators.

The general health of the Natives has been remarkably good, and there has been nothing whatever in the form of any special disease or epidemic amongst them. The sanitary conditions at all the main settlements have been greatly improved, and this has been due partly to the valuable oversight exercised under the régime of the Maori Councils and partly to the great improvement in the water-supplies at many settlements owing to the liberal manner in which the Government has dealt with the Natives in the matter of supplying water-tanks.

I have, &c.,

H. W. BISHOP,

Stipendiary Magistrate.

The Under-Secretary, Justice Department, Wellington.

SPECIAL REPORT UPON THE POTATO-BLIGHT.

NOTES OF ENUMERATORS AND SUB-ENUMERATORS.

Mangonui.

Waihou, Taimaro, Waimahaua.—The blight has been very severe, cutting down all the crops. Fortunately there appears to be every prospect of a fair yield of kumaras. Otherwise the Natives would be in a very bad way.

Keueua and Otongaroa.—Blight very destructive; no precaution taken, consequently all the small patches (in Keueua especially) were cut down.

Peria, Mangataiere, Victoria.—Blight has also been very severe, particularly in Mangataiere, where it is also affecting the kumaras, onions, and cabbage.

Takahue, Pama Puria, and Double Crossing.—Blight has cut down all the patches of potatoes, with one exception—Himiona Popeta, who had a beautiful crop of about 3 acres saved from blight through bluestone-spraying. Other crops are looking fairly well.

Ahipara (the largest Native settlement in the North).—Was affected by the blight; there were no potatoes saved at all. The Natives also fear that the kumaras are not so good as usual. Many of the small patches are showing signs of the brown curled leaf.