

*Cooking.*—I found amongst the Whakatohea people that the women are much better cooks than are the Tuhoe people, and was surprised at the quality of the home-made butter, bread, cake, &c., to be seen at Whakatohea kaingas. At Waioeka I observed several families partaking of breakfast seated at their dining-tables, and was impressed by the superiority of their mode of life.

*Kauta.*—In some places a better class of cooking-sheds have been erected; but in many cases women have to prepare food in the most wretched hovels. I marvel not that many prefer to cook in the open air. But I was conducted into a kauta of the descendants of Irapuaia, wherein I found a woman preparing food at a large cooking-range of the most improved design. Needless to say that I closed my notebook and left abruptly. It was no place for me.

There is one aspect of Maori domestic economy noted in this district which calls for remark. I allude to the *panem et circenses* state into which the people appear to be drifting. Each year they seem more and more inclined to appeal to Government for grants of food when any trouble comes upon them, and seem to give no thought to helping themselves. The potato-disease has much curtailed their main food-supply, undoubtedly, but they are much lacking in energy in the way of seeking other channels of food-supply. The Natives at Te Waimana are milking cows for the purpose of supplying the local factory with milk, and others might do well in the same line. Life is much too short for the Natives of Ruatoki to engage in the task of cultivating such things as cabbages, turnips, carrots, &c., albeit they show a willingness to assist me to dispose of the product of my own garden.

*Liquor.*—There is one point on which one may speak with a sense of pleasure—viz., in regard to drunkenness. There is not much drinking among the Natives of the Matatua District. The district constables support this statement, and appear to think that drinking is decreasing.

*Health.*—In reply to questions put during my late expeditions through the district, the Natives state that the past year has been, generally speaking, a healthy one.

*Births and Deaths.*—During the past year sixty-seven births and sixty-one deaths have been registered in the district. The excess of births over deaths is certainly small, but it is better than none. Thirty of these deaths were those of children, however, which is not to be wondered at when one knows how the hapless little ones are treated, or neglected, in illness and health.

*Tohunga.*—In respect to the genus tohunga I have but little to say, for the simple reason that correct information is most difficult to obtain. At thirty-one kaingas recently visited the people emphatically denied that any tohunga practised in the district. All members of the Matatua Council also deny that any sick persons are attended or treated by such in their districts. In regard to the Tuhoe District I am not prepared to believe these statements; but the Natives will not admit anything. I have heard Natives state that no assistance would be given to any action taken against the tohungas.

Waata te Rangikotua informs me that Hiromena, the female warlock of Ngatipukeko, is not now practising her gentle craft. As to Matoru and te Manihera of Ruatahuna, I can get no data to go upon. But of this much you may be assured—that most of the elder men of Tuhoe act as caretakers of the sick, or as advisers, and some of their methods of treatment are weird and wonderful.

In spite of my repeated remarks to the Council anent tohungas, the members steadily neglect to take any action in the matter.

There are many matters upon which I would fain make some remarks, but cannot see my way to making suggestions when I know that most of these Natives are “living in space,” as they put it, and cannot say that any one particular yard of land is their own. *Cui bono?*

*Potato-disease.*—The potato-blight is again in evidence this season, and, so far, the inland districts are much more affected than the coastal parts. There is no sign so far of the potato-crops at Te Teko being affected, nor yet at Pupuaruhe and Otamauru. The blight has just begun to appear in a few of the Ngatipukeko plantations. From Whakatane along the coast to Opape a few patches are affected, but not many. The Whakatohea have some fine-looking fields of kumara, which will help them should they lose the potato-crop. The Waimana and Ruatoki districts are much more affected than the coastal lands. The blight has also appeared at Ruatahuna and Te Whaiti, but it is too early to say what the loss will be. The Ruatoki people should go back to the kumara.

All my own patch of potatoes has been blighted, including some American seed and some of the famous Northern Star.

ELSDON BEST,

Sanitary Inspector.

Dr. Pomare.

SALUTATIONS to thee. Herewith I send to you my annual report on the inspection of kaingas in the Council or District of Arapawa: Number of villages visited, 6; total number of houses, 77; houses to be destroyed, 17; houses to be renewed, 23; houses to be painted, 30; water-closets to be erected, 39; number of new houses, 18.

Waikawa and Whangarae are both in need of a proper water-supply.

HAIMONA PATETE,

Sanitary Inspector.

Dr. Pomare.

Waihinahina, Dargaville, 22nd February, 1906.

SALUTATIONS to thee, O friend! Herewith I forward a short report of the general condition of affairs in this district. Everything is progressing favourably in the district, from the *maraes* outside even to the beds—for they all now sleep upon raised bedsteads. The drinking in publichouses has also come to an end altogether, unlike the old days.

The matter of water-supplies is the one urgent matter that I want to draw your attention to. The following places still want proper water-supplies: Ripia, Naumai, Oruaariki, Waihinahina, Taita, Maropiu, Ahikiwi, Kapehu, and Pouto. If a subsidy was given by the Government to encourage these Natives to buy tanks and get proper water-supplies it would hasten health matters considerably.