

It is a matter of some difficulty to ascertain the number of half-castes living as Maoris. There is no very defined rule to guide the Enumerators and sub-enumerators in deciding what half-castes should be classified as "living as Europeans" and "living as Maoris" respectively. This applies especially to the South Island. Probably it would not be very inaccurate to say that all half-castes—and, indeed, a large proportion of the Maoris as well—in the South Island live now in European fashion.

Judging from the reports of the Enumerators, it would appear as if the Maoris, as well as the half-castes, of the Dominion were departing from their old communistic habits, and were striving to carve out homes for themselves individually. Under these circumstances, I do not propose to classify them in any way, for the simple reason that it would only be conjectural.

It is an idea of many people that the ultimate fate of the Maori race is to become absorbed in the European. Whether any tendency is shown in this direction must be gathered from the increase or decrease in the number of half-castes. The present census shows that in the five years since the last census the number of half-castes has increased by 256. No valid deduction can be drawn except by taking account also of those half-castes who are living as Europeans and not accounted for in this census.

The health of the Natives has been generally good. There have been occasional outbreaks of typhoid and other fevers, influenza and kindred disorders, but there has been no epidemic of disease. In all cases of serious outbreak that have been reported the Native Health Department has promptly sent medical assistance, and has also supplied medical comforts and suitable food, at the discretion of the medical attendant. In one or two cases, where it was necessary to isolate the patients, the Department has also provided nursing assistance. A number of medical officers all over the Dominion are subsidized from the Native Civil List, together with several dispensers in districts where no medical men reside, and who, though not legally qualified to practise medicine, are quite able to dispense simple remedies for minor complaints. The duties of these officers are to treat and prescribe for every Native who may visit them at their surgeries, and to visit all patients who, through age or illness, are unable to come to them. In addition to them, the services of the Native-school teachers are largely utilized in the same work. The Department supplies these teachers with a selection of useful medicines, with simple directions as to their use; and there is every reason to believe that by their efforts much suffering is spared and many outbreaks suppressed. The good work performed by these ladies and gentlemen is deserving of notice.

During the last five years there has been a considerable change as regards the observance of sanitary laws by the Maori population of the Dominion.

It will be seen from the reports of the Enumerators and sub-enumerators that in this respect there has been a great advance. This is attributed largely to the instruction, example, and influence of the Chairman and members of the several Maori Councils appointed under the Maori Councils Act, 1900. Credit must also be given to the efforts of Dr. Pomare, Health Officer (a half-caste); to the several Sanitary Inspectors appointed by the Councils; and to Nurse Hei and Nurse Whangapirita (both Maoris). I regret, however, to report that Nurse Hei contracted typhoid and succumbed to the disease. Nurse Whangapirita also contracted typhoid, but I am pleased to report that she recovered. She has since resigned in order to get married. The work of these nurses cannot be too greatly eulogized. It is evident that the Maoris are beginning to realize that the excessive mortality, amongst their children especially, has been caused to a large extent by insanitary conditions prevalent in their settlements. While Maoris have in the past shown some indifference to the exhortations of European medical men, now that the matter has been taken in hand by their own leading chiefs, they may be expected to follow out more strictly the instructions given.

The diffusion of knowledge must tend to uplift the Maori. The transforming powers of education and association are at work, and must in time have their effect. The village schools are steadily improving the standard of knowledge among the Maori people as a whole, while the higher schools turn out a number of intelligent young fellows who want only the opportunity to show the value of the training they have received. Suitable openings in the public service are limited, but the Government has displayed a sympathetic regard for deserving Maori youths wherever possible.

The reports of the Enumerators and sub-enumerators attached hereto contain much of interest. It may not be out of place to note that the Maoris in the Bay of Islands (Ngapuhi) have erected nearly 100 miles of telephone, connecting up remote forest villages with the chief centres of the district, Kawakawa and Kaikohe. In this matter they have followed the lead of the Waiapu east-coast Natives, who were the pioneers of the Maori-owned telephone system in the Dominion.

Crime does not prevail in any marked degree. The Natives as a whole are becoming more and more temperate every year. The drunken orgies that were once common are in a great measure things of the past. In several of the reports reference is made to their adoption of the European style of living: some are sheep-farmers, others cultivate their land, while others again engage in various forms of remunerative labour. Every year the spread of settlement brings them into closer touch with their pakeha neighbours, and subjects them to the influence of European example.

As to the agricultural statistics, I would suggest that in future it should be kept separate, as the Agricultural Department collects these statistics annually. I fail to see that there is any advantage in taking it at the census period. As pointed out by the Enumerator for the Wellington District, a number of Maoris cultivated oats, but, as the crops had already been harvested, no count was taken thereof, and on that account it was impossible to arrive at the correct statistics. Lands being cultivated, grass or tussock country, and stock all come under the heading of agricultural statistics, and should not be collected with the census. I would like to draw particular attention to the schedule relating to communal farms and live-stock. The practice of farming upon the communal system is practised largely in the Waiapu district, and the returns show that they are, to all appearances, a success.

Wellington, May, 1911.

THOS. W. FISHER, Under-Secretary.