

Native people ; furthermore, I have repeatedly expostulated with the Natives for continuing to inhabit the unhealthy localities, at the same time drawing their attention to the rapidity with which the disease has spread under these conditions, and likewise the almost total absence of disease of any character under favourable and other circumstances. They, however, treat the matter with indifference, and the conditions in nearly every case remain unaltered.

There is no doubt but that the feeling of absolute security from attack by a hostile band, which has obtained since the establishment of British rule, is the prime cause or reason why the Natives have adopted the injurious practice of building their kaingas on the low-lying grounds adjoining their cultivations, where there is little or no drainage, and where the dank, unwholesome atmosphere is fertile in producing and augmenting all diseases of a zymotic character, or of affections of the respiratory organs, more especially among those of a scrofulous diathesis.

It is with sincere regret, then, that I have to report that the conditions just mentioned may be considered the sanitary state of the district under my charge, and yet, taking it as a whole, it is not to be considered worse than most other localities in the north of this Island, and it is only under circumstances the most aggravated where infectious diseases establish themselves.

The district during the past year has, until latterly, been exceptionally free from contagious disorders, and, I may say, that the recent advent of typhoid fever may be accounted for by their living under canvas, and in wretched tenements during the excitement caused by an outbreak of a superstitious nature at Kaikohe, and the subsequent hardships experienced by the young, whose parents were attending the Native Land Court at this place ; the children being left improperly, or rather negligently, to their own devices, with an insufficiency of food, and that of a bad quality, and all this combined with the unhealthy situation chosen for their habitations.

There is one other matter, I may mention here, as perhaps being worthy of remark, affecting as it does the existence of the race, and that is, the carelessness, amounting to culpability, of the maidens from the age of puberty to marriage ; the baneful practices adopted by them at and during the periods of menstruation, whereby they suffer chills, etc., supervened by fever in many cases, and which cause a cessation of the function, and, of course, affecting altogether the healthy condition of the female. The depraved condition thus established cannot but be viewed with anxiety, for there is an increased tendency to the insidious development of many general and local diseases, consumption amongst the number, and I feel sure that the unfruitfulness so apparent in the young wives of to-day, is to be attributed in a great measure to these hurtful practices. It is, however, a difficult matter to convince them that their careless or wilful conduct is the immediate cause of their present distress or their future decimation and final extinction.

To enumerate and classify the cases treated during the past year, I give the following figures and diseases in general terms, viz :—Affections of the respiratory organs, 87 ; general causes, 72 ; functional, as above reported, 18 ; zymotic disease, 10 ; and injuries, 6. Total number of cases, 193.

I have, &c.,

The Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington.

ROBINSON SPENCER.

No. 4.

Mr. W. S. KING, Waimate North, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department.

No. 85/1540.

SIR,—

Waimate North, 6th May, 1885.

In reply to your request through your Secretary, *re* the sanitary state of the Natives in my district, I have the honour to report, that at the present time there is no serious sickness, with the exception of an occasional case of low fever, which in the summer months was so prevalent in some parts, particularly Kaikohe. Medical returns to the end of March have been forwarded to the Native Office, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

WILLIAM S. KING,

Native Dispenser.

The Hon. Native Minister, Wellington.

No. 5.

DR. PAYNE, Thames, to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Native Department.

SIR,—

Thames, May 13th, 1885.

In accordance with your Circular of April 20th, I now beg to report on the sanitary state of the Natives in this district. I may premise, however, that, in the absence of any special instructions as to any special point, I find some difficulty in doing so. Again, the population being to a considerable extent migratory, many of them coming from a considerable distance, it is difficult to give anything approaching to a percentage of the sick in the district. As a whole, the health of the Native population is fairly good, and there has been an entire absence of any epidemic disease during the past fifteen months, *i.e.*, from January 1st, 1884, to March 31st, 1885. The great majority of cases that have come under my notice being tubercular and pulmonary ; and, while giving all due allowance to hereditary taint, a very prolific cause of these diseases may be found in their manner of living. Take an instance in point :—I visited lately a mother and baby at Te Kopata : the mother was suffering from broncho-pneumonia, and was coughing so violently as to threaten the rupture of a blood vessel ; the baby was suffering from acute bronchitis, and both were lying on a mat spread on the bare ground, in a small whare, some 6 x 8 feet, the walls being so imperfect as to admit the wind freely in all directions—indeed, to my mind, most uncomfortably so. Again, I have found the opposite extreme, some cabins being so close and stuffy, and so full of smoke from a fire smouldering on the ground, that it required some practice to see at all. Some of the Maoris, again, are living in well-built houses, of a European type.