

The establishment of Native schools, the medical men in the out-districts, the Maori Councils, and the general march of progress all tend to so settle the Maori mind that the Natives themselves are becoming gradually accustomed to the new conditions of life provided for them. The benefits of the Maori Councils and Committees are very apparent, and the Natives are taking a great interest in their local affairs, which fills a long-felt want. Hitherto their minds have been occupied in scheming about the disposition of their land; now there is an opportunity for them to assist in the control of local affairs, and I do not think that I am too optimistic in saying that this will prove to be a great factor in gradually preparing the way to the ultimate elevation of the Maori—viz., their fusion with the white race. This desirable state of affairs may be brought about by the continuance of the efforts for the prevention of disease, the education of the children, the greater scope allowed them in their local affairs, the good will of their fellow British colonists, and gradually by legislation.

The statistics of crops and stock show that there is no remarkable increase in cultivation of foodstuffs, but a large increase in the area of sown grass (mostly within the last three years). Although the number of sheep has decreased, the cattle show a good increase, and in a few years the increase in cattle will be much greater, as it is found cattle are less trouble than sheep.

The Natives ought to be taught more about agricultural matters. I would respectfully suggest that the Agricultural Department have some of their pamphlets translated into Maori, and sent to the Native-school teachers and Maori Councils for distribution. As requested, a special report has been sent in by each sub-enumerator regarding the potato-blight. From these special reports and my own observations, there is no doubt that the blight is general, and has been very destructive. It is a question whether seed should be planted to any great extent. The Natives, of course, would be glad to receive a donation of seed, but is it worth risking further loss through blight? Would it not be better to cultivate some other article of food in place of the potato, pending the probable passing of the blight—say, beans, peas, and a number of other nutritious vegetables. It has been reported that the blight is likely to cause severe destitution among the Maoris. It is certain that it will cause them to work harder at something else, but they do not rely entirely on the potato-crop. If it is considered necessary to assist the Natives in the coming spring, then I would respectfully suggest that the scheme of assistance should include the translation of pamphlets into Maori, and the distribution of vegetable-seeds as above mentioned.

In conclusion, I would say that the general health and condition of the Natives in the Northern District is fair, and that, with a little more energy infused, possibly by the imparting to them of useful agricultural information, their condition will be further improved.

The reports of the sub-enumerators and Enumerator's summary are attached hereto.

I have, &c.,

C. W. P. SEON, Enumerator.

The Under-Secretary, Department of Justice, Wellington.

EXTRACTS FROM THE REPORTS OF SUB-ENUMERATORS.

Northern Mangonui.

I have lived in this district about sixteen years, and I am well acquainted with the Native inhabitants and their ways and means of living. As sub-enumerator I have taken great pains in getting every Maori enumerated, and they have given me no end of trouble, as they are so much scattered, not like in olden days, when one could go to a kainga or settlement and get the lot.

The chief occupation of the Maori in this district is gum-digging, it being a gum-bearing district. The land is very poor, and not suitable for cropping purposes, as you will see by my returns. The Maoris in this district do very little cropping; they depend entirely on what they earn by gum-digging. I find them scattered all over the gumfields, and but seldom find anybody in the old kaingas—the old homes are deserted. The reason is that they have taken all the gum near at hand, and therefore must move to better fields to make a living.

As regards the health of the Maori, at present I find them in very good health. Being summer-time they are doing fairly well at the gum, and have plenty to eat; but I believe they have a very hard time of it in winter, the gumfields being wet and gum hard to get. A year or two back they had a very severe attack of sickness, which caused a great many deaths; they were dying like sheep, and I believe this was caused through starvation and want of clothing. One great mistake in Maori custom is that at a death they assemble together from far and near, and feast for a week or two, leaving the poor few that belong to the kainga or home foodless, and in most cases in debt to the storekeepers. I think the *huis* and feasts are the cause of so many deaths, or rather of the spreading of diseases causing death.

In reference to potato-blight, I can hardly comment on this, as there were no crops here to destroy.

Mangonui.

The Native settlements, from a sanitary point of view, have very much improved within the last five years. The old Maori hut is slowly becoming a thing of the past, and with the wooden cottages that they are now having built in substitution for the old raupo whares, it is hard for a stranger to distinguish the Maori settlement from the home of a European backblock settler. It will be noticed in my subdistrict, and possibly in others, that fewer pigs are kept in settlements now than was the case many years ago. At times of *huis*, *tangis*, &c., communism still reigns, but their every-day life, their mode of living, *re* meals, beds, &c., is more in accordance with the European style.

The rising generation of Natives is quite conversant with matters of the day, and those youths who are now in their twenties and thirties appear to be very energetic and anxious to work, and it will be admitted that they are just as capable of taking on all classes of manual labour as are