

ventilation also has been afforded to these by the addition of more windows. Families are living quite decently in their separate homes like Europeans, and the husband and wife are taking advantage of all the useful arts of civilisation—namely, education and industry. They send their children to school regularly, and in some of the backblocks there may be seen Native children exceeding European children in number. It is very pleasing to notice that in some of these schools Maori boys and girls are taking the lead in the majority of the subjects taught there. The men of the villages find employment on stations as shearers, wagon-drivers, &c., or at bushfelling, or roadmaking. When planting season comes round they return home and help their wives to plant their potatoes or kumaras, and away they go again to earn more money to keep down the grocer's bill, leaving the women to finish up the gardening duties. It is sad to state that in this particular district their crops proved an entire failure this year, due to the prevalence of the potato-blight. The small areas that have been allotted to potato-crops were altogether ruined by the blight, and it is a serious question whether the Natives will see the end of the year with the little they managed to save. The Natives of this district do not cultivate the kumara plant to such an extent as the Natives of the East Coast. Kumaras, if planted, would, of course, have taken the place of the potato. Had they foreseen the result of this frightful blight they might have planted acres and acres of kumaras to support their families for a year or more. The blight was so widely spread over the country that it is almost useless to report its actual work of devastation in figures; suffice it to say that the Natives are suffering, and will eventually suffer, from the want of their main article of food, for their crops are all destroyed. Their seed-potatoes must be obtained from outside sources next year.

The Maori villages, on the whole, do not need the complete system of sanitation necessary for Europeans, because the Natives do not live so closely together as pakehas do in towns. Besides, their villages are nearly all situated close to the sea or on the bank of some fresh-water stream, which acts as a powerful means of cleansing the whole settlement. Their needs as regards the sanitary question are simply confined to the matter of the water they drink, the houses they live in, and the food they eat. With regard to the houses, they have improved marvellously. There is, however, room for improvement in the second point—viz., water. The Maori Council, I am glad to note, is doing good work in this branch by reserving certain portions of the neighbouring streams for the purpose of obtaining fresh unpolluted water. The food of the Natives consists chiefly of shell-fish from the sea, potato, kumara, wild pork, and puwha. They have, upon the whole, imitated their white brethren very well in this line. The habit of purposely putrefying some of their articles of food before eating them has ceased. Their sense of taste has been educated as well as their sense of smell. Seeing that this has been the case with regard to the sanitary question amongst the Poverty Bay Natives, there has been no epidemic of any pernicious disease among them during my tour. The health of the Natives has altogether improved since the introduction of the Maori Village Councils. As a consequence of their success in imitating the European mode of living, I see a marked increase in the birth-rate.

2. *Tohungaism and other Evils.*—Under this head I wish to point out to the public that tohungaism is on the decrease. Two or three years ago the Natives went mad almost after tohungas; now their attitude is entirely changed. They are beginning to see that the European doctor or chemist is far superior to the tohunga and all his witchcraft. Here and there, however, may be seen isolated families still clinging to their tohunga, still sympathizing with him, and upholding his mana. When Wereta was at his best, he and his apostles were the pests of the whole island. They worked hard to obtain followers everywhere they went, and did win over to his side many of the Poverty Bay Natives. But that is some time ago. His power is on the wane now, and is fast dying out. One or two of his apostles are still lurking in the Bay, but are making no headway, for the Maori mind is getting more and more enlightened.

I will not close without touching upon the two great temptations which I consider are perhaps proving too much for the Maori—namely, the hotel and the racecourse. Some of the Natives might have been owners of cattle, and perhaps living on independent means by this time if they had been able to resist the temptation and keep well out of the reach of beer and the totalisator. But what could the poor Maori do? He has the hotel next door with all it contains. He passes it day after day. One very hot day in summer does all the damage. He seeks shelter in one of these hotels. He is tempted, and, like other human beings, becomes a prey to a fearful habit. It is hard to say whether the evil caused by drink exceeds that caused by gambling. Speaking generally, there is greater actual evil done by gambling than by drink amongst the Natives, because the former leads to the latter in very many instances.

*Waiapu County. (Arthur Brooking, Sub-enumerator).*

A great many of the Maoris during these last two years have been gradually separating into smaller communities, and making homes for themselves apart from their centres; others, both men and women, are numerous employed on the many sheep-stations of the district. These neither plant crops nor raise stock, but this does not necessarily make them poorer than those who stay at home and plant, although it is true that some of the younger Natives spend most of their earnings in drink, flash clothes, and horses. The numerous Maori sheepowners are collectively a considerable factor as a cause of the numerical decrease of the pigs. Straying pigs are looked upon by the people of these stations as vermin, and are destroyed indiscriminately. As an instance of the decrease, Wharekahika, in 1901, returned 600 pigs; this census the return is only 154, although there is a decided increase in the population there. Many other places show a similar decrease.

The Maoris of this subdistrict, since the census of 1901, have not suffered from any fatal epidemic, and the death-rate has been comparatively low, notwithstanding the fact that many of them have suffered much privation during the last twelve months owing to the failure in a great many instances of their potato-crops owing to the blight.