

It is unfortunate that no figures are available in the 1921 census of the number of Maoris in these villages; as, however, the total Native population shows a definite increase, we must assume that there has been an increase in these localities.

It is difficult to estimate the probable increase of population, but we feel sure that with better conditions as regards housing and sanitation there will be an increase. Moreover, in the case of Whakarewarewa, an interesting fact as disclosed by the census figures is that the number of females exceeds that of the males in the proportion of 112 to 89, which, according to scientific data when such is the case, indicates that the rate of increase of population will be raised.

In both villages there are instances of overcrowding, and at Whakarewarewa evidence was given concerning this. In one building, 20 ft. by 22 ft., of four rooms, inspected by the Commission, fourteen persons were living. This family consisted of five married couples and four children. In another, nine persons were found in a three-roomed cottage; and in yet another ten persons were living in two rooms. This is a state of affairs that should be remedied at the earliest possible moment. At Whakarewarewa the position can be to some extent alleviated by assisting these people to build new homes, and also by constructing an access road to the ground at the back of the village. Several of the residents expressed their readiness to rebuild on this area if access were provided. The cost of forming such a road would be £200.

The buildings are occupied by their owners with but few exceptions, notable ones being at the approach to Whakarewarewa, where two shops are inhabited by natives of India. Many of the Maoris feel strongly about this, and expressed the opinion that the village should be reserved for Maoris. This sentiment was also voiced by the president of the Rotorua Chamber of Commerce, and the Commission is heartily in accord with these views.

The Commission feels that Whakarewarewa and the Native portion of Ohinemutu should be of a purely residential character, and that only dwellings, meetings-houses, and shops for the sale of Maori curios should be allowed. This matter could be controlled when a town-planning scheme is submitted.

Many of the buildings are of an unsuitable type and in a dilapidated condition. The Maoris in Ohinemutu estimate that at least twenty buildings, and the Whakarewarewa Natives that forty-five, should be demolished. Many of the fences are of timber in a decayed and unsightly condition, and we think that these should gradually be replaced by low rough stone walls, which would present a much more attractive appearance. There are other structures, such as outhouses and shelters round private bathing-pools, which could with advantage be removed or improved.

We would like to call attention to the building used as a tea-room in the Government reserve at Whakarewarewa, overlooking the geysers; this structure is not the type that one would expect in such a locality. If a tea-room were considered necessary it should at least have harmonized with the surroundings and been placed in a less conspicuous position. The photograph marked "Exhibit C" will illustrate its unsuitability. The Tourist Department allowed the owner to erect this building to his own plan, and charges him £1 per annum rental. To terminate the lease, which has several years to run, would mean the payment of compensation; but, notwithstanding this, we think that the building should be removed from its present position.

#### IMPROVING THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE VILLAGES.

The Commission is of opinion that the attractiveness of the villages would be materially enhanced by constructing new or altering old houses so as to maintain, as far as possible, one of the outstanding features of Maori architecture—namely, the front elevation with its distinctive *maihi*, or barge-boards. If, in addition, some suitable roofing-material more nearly approaching the colour and appearance of thatch could be devised to take the place of unsightly corrugated iron, the general appearance of a Maori village would be restored to a great extent.