



George Augustus Selwyn's sketch of a map of the Waimate district with population numbers, c. 1843. (ATL ref. qMS-1776, p. 434)

In early 1843, before the synod's decision, Selwyn had announced his intentions by taking a nominal census of the population of the Waimate area of Northland, counting nearly 1,300 Māori and providing a sketch map of Waimate villages and their respective populations.²³ Selwyn's census-taking had raised the ire of some prominent locals, including Hone Heke, who had concerns regarding missionary motivations, and saw it as a hostile rather than a humanitarian act.²⁴ Selwyn had also taken nominal censuses in the Foveaux Strait area in early 1844. He would later take further nominal censuses, including information on family structure, in the Bay of Plenty and Urewera areas in 1845–46.²⁵

Also before the synod's decision, the Reverend Richard Taylor had collected census information on villages in the Whanganui River area in the middle of 1843. He broke the information down by men, women, boys and girls, in what appears to have been the first missionary census to attempt a broad age-and-sex breakdown.²⁶ It is surprising that the nominal census which appears to have followed the synod's decision seems largely not to have followed Taylor's pattern.