

The petition, speaking of the alleged Constitution, describes it as “based on hereditary monarchy and an elective Parliament of one Chamber, which they have maintained to the present day and under which the will of the people is practically expressed.” Certainly there is neither an hereditary monarchy nor an elective Parliament now in existence in Rarotonga. There may have been such a system on paper at one time, but I heard no reference whatever to it during my stay, which, I may say, was not “only for a few days,” as the Alliance states. I was six weeks in the group, of which thirty days were spent in Rarotonga.

The petition states that, had liquor not been introduced, “the people would probably have remained as God created them and the missionaries found them—a perfectly sober nation.” The natives then drank *kava* (made from the *Piper methisticum*). This was prohibited by the first missionaries; but I believe the present missionaries very generally regard the prohibition as a mistake. In Rarotonga the natives are reverting to their old drink since imported liquor has been placed beyond their reach. It is to be hoped also that it will replace the “bush beer,” a compound of oranges, bananas, or pineapples, drunk in a state of full fermentation, very injurious, and largely consumed—contrary to law—by the natives, as described in my report. Of this the Alliance do not seem to be aware.

The petition states that I “appear for the time to have occupied by some means the Presidential Chair of the Legislature.” Only two Councils were held. The one was presided over by Tepou; the other by Maovete. I prepared in English the laws to be submitted, and they were kindly put into Rarotongan by the Revs. Messrs. Chalmers and Hutchin, in order that they might be well understood when brought before the Council. The liquor law, especially, was keenly debated during the two days that it was before the Council.

Having said this, it will I hope be unnecessary to comment on the Alliance’s charge that the Council was taken by surprise. I may be permitted to add, that the above, with other statements in the petition, would not, I think, have been made if the Alliance Committee had taken my suggestion, not to be influenced to action by the anonymous letter of a newspaper correspondent, but to await the publication of my report to His Excellency the Governor, in the preparation of which I was engaged when invited to attend their meeting.

FREDERICK J. MOSS.

Enclosure No. 4.

His Excellency the GOVERNOR to the Rev. Mr. CHALMERS.

(Telegram.)

4th February, 1891.

It is stated in petition from New Zealand Alliance that Mr. Chalmers is convinced that the Rarotongan Government has not the ability successfully to enforce prohibition without the external aid of a skilled European officer. Supposing that aid to be supplemented, he considers it perfectly possible absolutely to suppress all importation of strong drink. He is also convinced that the great bulk of the natives, including Queen Makea, do really and earnestly desire to maintain the prohibitory law. Kindly write and inform me whether this is a true expression of your opinion, that I may correctly inform the Secretary of State on the subject.

Rev. J. Chalmers, Congregational Minister, Dunedin.

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Enclosure No. 5.

Rev. J. CHALMERS to His Excellency the GOVERNOR.

My LORD,—

Dunedin, 5th February, 1891.

I have the honour to reply to your telegram, received last night.

No one of the *ariki*s wish for prohibition, except for their own people, and that of such a kind that they may be able to procure spirits as *vairakau* (medicine) when necessary. They are decidedly opposed to prohibiting the white man having liquor, and have expressed themselves openly in favour of its being allowed him on permit.

The *ariki*s cannot carry out prohibition alone, and the best that could be done under the circumstances was that advised by Mr. Moss. For ten years I lived on Rarotonga, and know well how impossible it was to work prohibition. I have good hopes the present law will do more to stop drink than any former prohibitory law.

During Mr. Moss’s stay on the island the public-houses, which numbered over twenty, were closed; and during that time I did not see one drunken man or woman: whereas, when I arrived, five weeks before Mr. Moss, drunkenness was prevalent everywhere, and strong drink sold openly at the bars to men and women, and that when a strong prohibitory law was supposed to be in force.

I am of opinion that, if it is necessary to suppress strong drink, and under no conditions whatever to allow natives to have it, a skilled European officer with a European staff will be necessary to assist Mr. Moss, as no native officer can be trusted to carry out the law. To prohibit white traders having what they require for personal use would be an uncalled-for hardship, and one that no officer, however skilled, could carry out on an island like Rarotonga.

I am quite in favour of the present arrangement having a fair trial, and hope for its success. If abused by the white residents, then total prohibition might again be tried.

I have, &c.,

JAMES CHALMERS,

London Missionary Society, New Guinea.

His Excellency the Earl of Onslow, Governor of New Zealand.