

SESS. II.—1891.
NEW ZEALAND.

IMPORTATION OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS AT RAROTONGA

(CORRESPONDENCE RESPECTING).

Return to an Order of the House of Representatives, dated 16th June, 1891.

Ordered, "That there be laid before this House all correspondence between Sir William Fox, as President of the New Zealand Alliance, His Excellency the Governor, and the Hon. Mr. Ballance in relation to the importation into Rarotonga of intoxicating liquors, the repeal of the Prohibitory Act, at the instigation of Mr. Moss, and any other documents relating to the same subjects."—(Mr. JOYCE.)

No. 1.

MEMORANDUM for HIS EXCELLENCY.

Premier's Office, Wellington, 16th March, 1891.

At the request of Sir William Fox, President of the New Zealand Alliance, Auckland, the Premier begs to forward, for His Excellency's perusal, a letter that has been received from that gentleman in further reference to the action taken by Mr. Moss, Resident at Rarotonga, with reference to the liquor-traffic. The Premier has simply acknowledged the receipt.

J. BALLANCE.

Enclosure.

Sir W. Fox to the Hon. the PREMIER.

SIR,—

Office of New Zealand Alliance, Auckland, 5th March, 1891.

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 19th February.*

I am sorry that the New Zealand Alliance cannot acquiesce in your "regret that it should have described Mr. Moss's action as unduly hasty and indiscreet." It is true, as you observe, that Mr. Moss had been instructed by the Governor "to inquire into the liquor traffic in the protectorate;" but His Excellency does not appear to have authorised him to take any action towards abolishing the prohibitory law in force, much less towards establishing a unique and unprecedented licensing law in its place. With apparently very little inquiry he set to work at once to persuade the *ariki*s to adopt his very original proposal, the whole matter being disposed of in two sittings of the Council, during which he appears to have occupied a sort of vice-regal chair, from which he guided the proceedings of the members. It should be borne in mind that this was not only a reversal of a long-established law of the islands, but was in defiance of the policy of the Imperial Government towards populations in the position of these islanders, as is pointed out with great clearness by His Excellency in his comments on Mr. Moss's action, in his published despatch of the 25th February, 1891." In all similar communities he says: "Total prohibition has been found to work well, and should be maintained in Mangara, and any other island of the group where it is already in existence. . . . As a general principle, Her Majesty's Government desire, in all islands of the Pacific coming under Her Majesty's authority, to maintain total prohibition of the liquor-traffic with the natives. . . . Both the Imperial and the colonial Governments entertain very strong opinions on this subject, and will not readily tolerate any law, short of total prohibition, which cannot be shown to secure sobriety among the Natives. If this law does not prove effective, you are authorised to announce that some means will have to be devised of raising funds to pay the necessary officials who will have to be appointed to prohibit, absolutely, the importation of alcoholic liquors into Cook's Islands." It is evident from these expressions that His Excellency felt himself to have been placed by Mr. Moss's precipitancy in an extremely embarrassing position. His Excellency evidently saw that the obvious and common-sense method of maintaining the prohibitory law would have been not to repeal it and supersede it by a sort of mongrel licensing law, but to provide the machinery necessary for

* *Vide* parliamentary paper, A-1, Sess. II., of 1891, p. 17.