

complaints are not of a more serious nature, and that they are the worst than can be said of the administration of affairs by me, under considerable difficulty, for nearly seven years.

Under these circumstances, although you have not called upon me for specific reply, I venture to enclose for your information a memorandum, which I have endeavoured to make as brief as possible.

I have, &c.,

FREDERICK J. MOSS,
British Resident.

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

MEMORANDUM for the Information of the Hon. the Premier in reply to certain Statements of Mr. Wilkie sent to the Hon. George Jones, M.L.C.

(1.) *Intoxicating Liquor to Maoris*: No Maori can obtain liquor without a special permit from his Ariki. The king, Maretu, and the queen, Makea, whom Mr. Wilkie includes among his references, are both Arikis, provided with printed books of such permits, each permit having a counter-foil to show to whom it was issued. Mr. Wilkie says they desire to stop the supply of liquor to the Natives. If it were so they could do this at any moment.

(2.) "*Rum offered for sale* in December last by a Native on the road to Ngatangia; also that he had been offered, time after time, rum from the Natives on the road from Avarua": This is a statement which I am utterly at a loss to understand. It is incredible on any other ground than that the Maoris were making fun of Mr. Wilkie, whom they always regarded as an eccentric person.

(3.) *The Bond-store* is a place in which is deposited all intoxicating liquor imported into the Cook Islands. It is in charge of an officer known as the Licensing Officer, appointed by statute and only removable by statute, so as to make his position perfectly independent. He issues permits to persons wishing to purchase. They buy from whom they like, and the seller indorses on the permit authority for delivery from his stock in the bond. To the Maoris permits can only be given on receipt of printed authority from the Ariki, above referred to. The Licensing Officer has large powers to guard against abuse. That they are exercised is proved by the prosecution a few months ago of a leading merchant here, by whom, or by whose employé, as he contended, permits had been obtained in the names of some persons while the liquor was sold to others. Fines and costs amounting to about £35 were levied in this case, although only a few bottles of gin were sold.

This system is peculiar, and often denounced as derogatory to those who have to ask for permits. But it was the only practicable experiment, and has worked well. It succeeded what was called "total prohibition," under which nineteen shanties were openly selling liquor of the worst kind although there were about two hundred so-called police entirely dependent for pay on the fines for breaches of this as well as other laws. The present law was passed on my advice, and after careful consideration. There can be no doubt that the old law was not in accord with public sentiment, and that, in the absence of an overwhelming majority in its support, the old law was demoralising the Maoris and the whole community. The present law was passed in 1890.

(4.) "*Donald and Edenborough's* entrance to the bond from their store": This is quite untrue. There is but one entrance to the bond, which is used by all.

(5.) "*The Federal Parliament* spent three days last session trying to have the bond and post-office removed, and the British Resident would not allow them to be removed": This is true. I refused to agree because the proposed arrangement involved a considerable outlay for public buildings and their maintenance, which the present tenure of buildings belonging to Donald and Edenborough rendered unnecessary. The movement in the Parliament originated in, and was maintained from, business jealousy with which the Government, in my opinion, had no concern. The rent paid for bond and post-office has always been and still is only £14 8s. a year.

(6.) "*The Natives say it is no use going to Parliament*, as Mr. Moss makes all the laws": Of course, in entering upon an entirely new system of government of which the Natives were completely ignorant the guidance of the Parliament and the construction of the laws devolved upon me. But from the first I have done what I could to get the Natives to think for themselves, and for the last four years have not been present at any of their meetings. Mr. Wilkie's statement as to their struggle to get public buildings erected for a bond and post-office, &c., is not consistent with submissiveness on their part. I may add that I find them scrutinising the published accounts and estimates very keenly. The Paymaster is a son of Judge Tepou, is good at accounts, and has a fair knowledge of English. He is also Clerk to Parliament and Government. The accounts are transmitted to New Zealand by me when laid on the table here, and will be found in full published among the New Zealand parliamentary papers.

(7.) "*No postal orders from or to Auckland*": Money is received by the Postmaster here and sent to the Auckland Post-office, which transmits a money order to the address indicated. The postal communication of the Cook Islands only dates from 1891, when it was established by the help of the New Zealand Government, without whose help it would have been impossible.

(8.) "*Government charges 2s. per dollar, but only allows 1s. 6d.*": This is incomprehensible. Government only takes British coin since 1st January, 1895. The Chili dollar is still current, as there is no means of keeping up a regular supply of British money. Credit for duties on all imports is given to importers. They are allowed two months in this way to export their Chili money and obtain British coin instead.

(9.) In conclusion, with reference to the other gentlemen whom Mr. Wilkie quotes, I may say that Mr. Kohn is manager of the Cook Islands Trading Company (Limited), and has long been emphatic on grievances which he considers he has suffered from me—more especially in connection with the action taken by me in relation to a banking monopoly which he desired to establish for his company, and respecting which I wrote to His Excellency the Governor on 20th April, 1896. The Mr. Olliver referred to is in Mr. Kohn's employ, though I have never known him to take any active part in affairs here.

FREDERICK J. MOSS,
British Resident.

Rarotonga, 26th May, 1897.

Approximate Cost of Paper.—Preparation, not given; printing (1,375 copies), £26 3s.

By Authority: JOHN MACKAY, Government Printer, Wellington.—1897.

Price 1s.]