

No one can go about Rarotonga for a week without noticing the disgracefully drunken habits of natives. It is impossible to walk 500 yards any evening in the week without meeting at least half a dozen natives the worse for liquor, sometimes considerably more.

This state of matters cannot be attributed to the milder beverages of native manufacture, which are to be ranked with such an English beverage as cider—wholesome and, even in excessive quantities much less injurious than the poison that is constantly sold here to the unsophisticated native as rum.

Kindly forward a copy of this letter to the New Zealand Government in your next despatch.

I have, &c.,

GEORGE CRAIG, M.B., C.M. (Edin.).

[I objected to this letter as coming from Dr. Craig personally in reply to one addressed by the Government to the Hospital Board, and wrote to him pointing out the irregularity, and requesting him to get authority to write for the Board. The result was the letter in print on next page to the same purport, but with the authority of the Board.—F. J. M.]

Enclosure No. 2.

[Translation.]

To the Arikis of Rarotonga, of Avarua, of Ararangi, and of Takitumu.

I SEND herewith a letter which Dr. Craig has published in *Te Torea* of Saturday, 21st August. I hear that you have been told this letter does not concern you, but that it is my affair and that of Mr. Garnier (the Licensing Officer). Be not deceived. If these statements are true it is the Arikis, the Arikis' Courts, and the police that will be blamed, and the question will be asked of what use are they, and why cumber they the ground (Luke, 13, 7.) My advice to you, therefore, is to ask Dr. Craig quickly where and how he got the information, so that you may see whether all or what part of it is true, and let me know, that I may write to the Governor of New Zealand. Enough.

From your friend,

FREDERICK J. MOSS, British Resident.

20th August, 1897.

(Letter above referred to.)

SIR,—

Rarotonga, 14th August, 1897.

In obedience to a request from the Clerk of the Government that I be asked to furnish an explanation of a clause in my report on the diseases due to alcohol in Rarotonga—viz., “that there are special facilities and encouragement given for the liquor traffic among natives”—I have been instructed to give some explanation.

When I wrote the report I did not think any explanation would be necessary, as the facts I stated are generally known.

The encouragement I refer to lies in the fact that the chiefs have a direct interest in the sale of liquor to the natives. I allude to the open and indiscriminate sale of permits. The facilities are well known, but I suppose I am expected to mention them. Certain individuals openly retail liquor daily to all comers, charging so much money per drink, without any police interference. No one could go about for a week in Rarotonga without noticing the disgracefully drunken habits of the natives. It is a rare thing to walk 500 yards any evening in the week without meeting half a dozen drunken natives, sometimes considerably more. As long as these facilities for traffic in imported spirits are allowed to exist it is impossible to attribute any of the blame for the drunken habits of the natives to the much less potent beverages of native manufacture. These are to be ranked with such an English beverage as cider—wholesome and, even in excessive quantities, doing infinitely less harm than the poison that is retailed to the unsophisticated natives as rum.

Kindly forward a copy of this letter in your next despatch to the New Zealand Government.

I have, &c.,

GEORGE CRAIG, M.B., C.M. (Edin.).

F. J. Moss, Esq., British Resident.

DISEASES PRODUCED BY INTOXICATING LIQUOR AND THE DRINKING HABITS OF THE MAORIS.

[No information as to the nature of the diseases attributable to alcohol and treated by him has been secured from Dr. Craig.]

From the BRITISH RESIDENT to His Excellency the ADMINISTRATOR of the GOVERNMENT.

(No. 8/97.)

SIR,—

25th July, 1897.

I have the honour to inform your Excellency that on several occasions during the last few months I have reason to believe there was a gradually increasing relaxation in the administration of the liquor law of 1890, which has created and still maintains a condition of affairs far better than that existing under the attempt at forced prohibition which it succeeded. Still, it was necessary to check the relaxation. With this object I wrote to the Arikis, with whom rests the sole power of issuing permits for liquor to natives. Unfortunately, the Arikis depute this power to one of their chiefs, and a system has grown of charging for the permits, the money being—Maori-like—made a prerequisite of the chief.

To check this and other growing evils I have been collecting general information, with returns of the liquor issued under Arikis' permits, and data on other points, with a view to bringing the subject before the Rarotongan local Council at its approaching meeting. I had hoped to get the papers complete and in print before submitting them to your Excellency, but find that the Hospital Board have published in the *Torea* newspaper, the day before yesterday, one of the letters that had been obtained on my application from the medical officer in charge of the Hospital. I have therefore thought it best to send the whole of the medical information to the present time, and enclose communications numbered 1 to 7 herein.

Dr. Caldwell's letters will be found specially full and interesting. The information given by him can, I feel sure, be thoroughly depended upon as correct. He is so thorough an opponent of alcohol in any form that his percentages may be safely regarded as not under the mark. His experience extends over the last four years.

Dr. Craig's experience is much shorter—between four and five months only. His objections to the use of alcohol are only those of most people who denounce the abuse, but his statement is incomplete till the reply to letter No. 4, of the 15th July, is received. Dr. Craig's remark as to the “special facilities and encouragement given to the liquor traffic among the natives” is incomprehensible. I should have sought an explanation direct instead of through the Hospital Board, to save time, but unfortunately Dr. Craig resents much the interference of the Government, on my advice, in seeking to uphold the statute-law which was infringed by the terms of the arrangement under which the hospital and its subsidy from the Government were handed over to him by the Board.

Lately there has been very cheap, and, I fear, very bad, rum imported and sold here by the bottle at 1s. 8d., of which half goes for duty and permit fees. If this liquor be as bad as the price would indicate, it might account for much of the mischief from drinking the bush beer. I have sent a few bottles from different parcels to Auckland for analysis and a proper report.

It seems to me noteworthy that, among the diseases attributed by Dr. Caldwell to intoxicating liquor among the natives, he has not included *delirium tremens*, hobnailed liver, and others which mark the habitual drunkard. Dr. Caldwell tells me that cases of this kind only occur among the Europeans.

In conclusion, I can assure your Excellency that this subject has always been one of great concern to me. Total prohibition has been tried for some years, and proved a lamentable failure in the absence of an overwhelming public sentiment in its favour. The bush beer has always been, and still is, strictly prohibited, but the law could only be enforced by the employment of Europeans at impracticable expense, and even then with much uncertainty. One of