

SUMMARY OF ATTENDANCE FROM 10TH APRIL TO 23RD AUGUST, 1897.

Week ending	Attendance.	Daily Average.	Week ending	Attendance.	Daily Average.
April 10 ..	538 ..	107.3	June 26 ..	28 ..	5.3
" 17 ..	499 ..	99.4	" 30 (3 days) ..	18 ..	6.0
" 24 ..	539 ..	107.4	July 5 ..	156 ..	31.1
May 1 ..	477 ..	95.2	" 12 ..	145 ..	29.0
" 8 ..	358 ..	71.3	" 19 ..	215 ..	43.0
" 15 ..	285 ..	57.0	" 26 ..	170 ..	34.0
" 22 ..	41 ..	8.1	Aug. 2 ..	236 ..	47.1
June 5 ..	189 ..	37.4	" 9 ..	262 ..	52.2
" 12 ..	178 ..	35.3	" 16 ..	225 ..	45.0
" 19 ..	192 ..	38.2	" 23 ..	206 ..	41.1

Days no school, 21. From Titikaveka and Matavera no attendance, children not having attended for some months prior to my taking charge.

I have, &c.,
H. ELLIS,
Head-teacher, Takitumu School.

From the ARIKIS (the Government of Rarotonga) to the RAROTONGA COUNCIL.

WE lay before you, in this our Opening Message for the present session, a letter from the British Resident sent to us, respecting the liquor laws, and the public schools. In laying that letter before you we urge the necessity of your giving these questions the most full and careful consideration. Be not in haste over them—especially the public schools, which will affect not only the children now growing up, but those who are to come for generations after them. Make full inquiry, and when you have decided what you think best to be done let us know, and we will say whether we agree or do not agree with your views.

The Rarotonga Council.

As we have not yet been able to get the laws printed, it will be well to remind all the people of what the Council consists. This is the law which was passed on 22nd September, 1893: The Council is divided into two parts, the Council of Arikis and that of the people. You are the Council of the people, and when you have agreed to anything it is to be brought to us. If we agree also, and the British Resident approves, then it is law. If we do not agree, then it falls to the ground.

The Government.

The Arikis of Rarotonga are not only a part of the Council, they are also the Government. As the Government we now speak to you and say what has been done during the past year, and send you the British Resident's letter about the liquor and the schools for your consideration.

The Revenue

for the year ending 30th June, 1897, has been £763 5s. 1d., namely:—

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Subsidies from Federal Government ..	102	0	0	Court fees—Takitumu ..	11	15	7
Permits for liquor—Maoris ..	192	2	0	Education rate—Avarua ..	81	4	6
" " Others ..	210	16	5	" " Arorangi ..	21	17	5
Road-tax—Avarua ..	13	8	4	" " Takitumu (for two years) ..	32	0	5
" " Arorangi ..	..	..	..		763	5	1
" " Takitumu ..	..	..	..	Add to this the balance in hand on 1st July,			
Dog-tax—Avarua ..	15	13	10	1897 ..	75	12	4
" " Arorangi ..	0	6	7				
" " Takitumu ..	..	..	..	Total receipts ..	838	17	5
Court fees—Avarua ..	68	0	0				
" " Arorangi ..	14	0	0				

Expenditure.

The expenditure for the year ending 30th June has been £632 1s. 6d., namely:—

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Public schools ..	172	10	0	Rent of bond ..	5	8	0
Arikis' Courts—Judges and police ..	296	10	0	Auditing and departmental ..	22	10	0
Expenses of the Council ..	9	10	0		632	1	6
Roads and road inspector ..	65	0	0				
Printing, stationery, interpreting, and general contingencies ..	60	13	6				

Leaving a balance on 1st July, 1897, of £206 15s. 11d., from which must be deducted outstanding liabilities not exceeding £50. Full accounts will, as usual, be laid before you. We do not think it necessary to say more at present. The schools and the liquor law are all which we bring before you for consideration. In dealing with them, and all other matters for the good of Rarotonga, we pray that God will give you wisdom and His blessing on your work.

For the Government.

Rarotonga, 31st August, 1897.

TONOMANA (Ariki).

From the BRITISH RESIDENT to the ARIKIS (The Government of Rarotonga).

The Public Schools.

WE have arrived at a point in connection with the public schools when change of some kind is imperative. The two great difficulties are the apathy of parents as to the attendance of their children, and the insufficiency of the funds at our command to obtain the requisite supply of teachers. Thanks to the London Missionary Society we have Miss Sievwright in Avarua, and thanks to the Adventists Mission we have Mr. Rice in Arorangi; but the Takitumu district has never been properly supplied. Their school was for a long time absolutely closed, and the teacher now in charge is only temporarily appointed. The difficulties are plain. The question is how best to meet them with an eye to the paramount object—the education in English of the children.

The teachers in Avarua and Arorangi have proved themselves able and zealous, and the irregular attendance of the children is no fault of theirs. In a paper which will be laid before you the teachers suggest a truant law; but, where the great majority of the children are truants, could such a law be made effective? Failing that, would it be possible, by forming local committees, to induce the parents to take a more active interest in the schools? Again, as to the money question, can we solve it by making a charge for each child in addition to the tax already paid by the parents, and how much should it be?

If none of these things can be done there is but one other course, to admit that Rarotonga is not yet ripe for a free-public-school system, to enlist in behalf of secular education the services and influence of the churches, and to encourage any one desiring to open a school by aiding all alike with a fixed subsidy for the average attendance during the week or month, as the case may be. Such a subsidy would, of course, be conditional on the schools submitting to periodical examinations, and to such inspection as the Government might think necessary, as well as on their making provision for proper teaching in the English tongue. One such school is already subsidised by the Federal Govern-