

*Electoral Rights to Europeans, &c.*

Each island makes its own arrangement for elections of Legislature, and none of them have—nor could any be induced to provide—ordinary electoral machinery, as we understand the term. There is no law requiring the ballot, and I do not understand to what the petitioners refer. Each island, in its constitution, gives the same rights exactly to Europeans of one year's domicile as to natives. The Federal Constitution merely leaves each island to send its members, elected as the island may think best.

*Expenditure on the Residency.*

I have frequently referred to the need of this expenditure in my despatches, and refrained from occupying the house for four years to avoid it, contenting myself with a small three-roomed cottage, in which I lived and had my office during that time.

*Laws not carried into effect.*

Too vague to admit reply.

*Hospital inaugurated against the Wish of Parliament, &c.*

An extraordinary statement, which I cannot understand. As to the building, it was purchased, on the recommendation of Dr. Caldwell, from Donald and Edenborough for the small and undoubtedly cheap price of £100. A further sum of £250 was afterwards spent in additions and fittings. It was never intended as a hospital in the sense in which the term is generally used, but only for emergency cases. The nursing is done almost invariably by the patient's family in the rare cases of resident patients, to whom free treatment, as well as to outdoor patients, has been practically abolished by the Hospital Board. As to the sufficiency of the income under existing conditions, it will suffice to quote the Board's official report, dated 9th July, 1897. The report is signed by Mr. Kohn, as chairman, and states that Dr. George Craig had been engaged for a term of twelve months from the 1st April, 1897: "The remuneration to be at the rate of £180 per annum, for which amount Dr. George Craig is to provide a suitable nurse, medicines, food, and attendance to all patients at the hospital as required." To this should be added that a new regulation of the Board at the same time raised the charge for indoor patients from the previous rate (7s. per week) for food and attendance to £1 per week, which is so much added to the £180 agreed upon. However, the Government, in September, 1896, handed over the hospital to the elected Board, and have nothing to do with it beyond collecting the import duty levied for its support.

*Harbour Dues collected, &c.*

On the 7th July, 1896, I wrote as follows to Mr. Kohn, in connection with a dispute between his company and the pilot, which had been referred to me: "There are no harbour regulations. The Government have nothing to do with the pilot nor with the harbour. I have always declined the responsibility, which would involve heavy and undesirable taxation from their peculiar character. The pilot has to find his own boat and crew, and is authorised by the Ariki from old time to make a certain charge when his services are made use of."

*Vessels sailing without Certificated Masters.*

This is true. Certificated masters are very rare in the Cook Islands, but no one is allowed charge of a vessel without reasonable proof of competency. Mr. Kohn on more than one occasion had uncertificated masters for the "Lorraine," and Mr. Piltz for his vessel.

*Unsatisfactory Laws in some of the Islands, to the detraction of British Trade.*

Too vague again for reply, but, in connection with "the detraction of British trade," I attach hereto the results of an inquiry instituted by me at the request of the Rev. W. Cullen, of Mangaia,\* to meet very strong charges against the Government of that island by two traders there. The case is typical of many made on the ground of injury to British trade.

*Road-tax levied and Nothing done, &c.*

The road-tax is only in Rarotonga, and the British Resident is in no way concerned in it. I find the amount received for 1895-96 was £25 14s. 11d, and for 1896-97 only £13 8s. 4d., with £10 or £12 to be probably added as paid in after the close of the financial year.

*Public Schools a Failure, &c.*

In this there is too much truth so far as their continuing to be "free" is concerned, and the case was fully represented to the Ariki's Council (Rarotonga) by me in August, as reported in my despatch, No. 18, of the 17th September. The tax collected for the two years that it has been in operation amounted to £227 17s. 2d.—far too little to support the free schools, with an attendance that ought to be five hundred children, which would be required. In any case, they have so far done good work that the Maoris have now an admittedly intense desire to have their children taught English, and if the schools fall after their short two years' existence there will be schools opened by the three missions now at work here, instead of education being dependent on the London Mission alone. The law for Rarotonga requires—and for the other islands also—that no schools shall be established in which provision for teaching English is not satisfactorily made.

*Liquor Law unsatisfactory.*

Too vague for reply. The subject has been exhaustively dealt with in my previous despatches to His Excellency the Governor of New Zealand.

Rarotonga, 7th November, 1897.

FREDERICK J. MOSS,  
British Resident.

\* This report—Mangaia—has already been sent in my despatch (22/97) of the 14th October.—F. J. M.