

any religious body detailing the circumstances of their marriage. The declaration shall briefly state where the persons in question were married, and by whom, also where they intend to reside, and shall contain a clause to the effect that they know of no legal reason why the aforesaid marriage should not be recognised. This declaration shall be forwarded to the Registrar of the High Court at Rarotonga, together with any recommendation the minister taking the declaration shall see fit to make. If the circumstances of the case as detailed are satisfactory, the High Court may order that the marriage shall be held to be good and legal within the limits of the Cook Islands.

9. Any person who shall make a false declaration under the foregoing section may, on conviction, be fined a sum not exceeding three pounds, or, in default of payment, not more than one month's imprisonment with hard labour.

10. The decision of the High Court shall be gazetted in each case heard under section 8, and a fee of five shillings shall in each instance accompany the declaration.

11. Any man who has been living apart from his wife, or any wife who has been living apart from her husband, for a period of three years, may apply to the High Court for a divorce, and if he or she can show that the circumstances of the case are such that they are entitled to relief the Court will grant a divorce.

12. Any act of adultery committed by either husband or wife shall entitle the aggrieved and innocent party to apply to the High Court for a divorce.

13. Continuous acts of cruelty shall entitle a wife to obtain a divorce.

14. A fee of twenty shillings shall be payable for a decree of divorce, and in no case shall the costs of such a suit exceed twenty-six shillings and sixpence.

15. It shall be the duty of each minister of religion registered under this Act to keep a complete record of the births, deaths, and marriages of his congregation.

No fee shall be charged for any such entry, but any parent failing to register the birth of a child within one month from the date thereof, and the nearest relative of any deceased failing to register the death within the same period, shall be liable to a fine of five shillings, which may be recovered before the district or Ariki's Court.

Passed.

Te Ariki TAPU RANGI,
Chairman to Cook Islands Parliament.

Approved.

MAKEA, Ariki,
Chief of the Federal Government.

Approved. To come into operation on the 2nd day of August, 1899.—W. E. GUDGEON,
British Resident.

The Residency, 1st August, 1899.

NO. 4, 1899.—AN ACT TO SECURE UNIFORMITY IN LEASES AND SECURITY OF TENURE TO FOREIGN LESSEES WITHIN THE ISLAND OF RAROTONGA.

BE IT ENACTED by the Federal Parliament at Rarotonga, with the consent of the British Resident:—

1. The Short Title of this Act shall be "The Land Act, 1899."

2. There shall be a Land Board for the Island of Rarotonga, hereafter to be called "the Board," which shall be composed of the British Resident and the five Arikis; and this Board shall meet at such times and places as shall hereafter be notified in the *Cook Islands Gazette*: Provided always that if the land of any Mataiapo shall be the subject of an inquiry, such Mataiapo shall be entitled for the time being to a seat on the Board.

3. It shall be the duty of the Board to inquire into the nature and conditions of each lease brought before it in order that the rights of the native population may be conserved.

4. No lease shall be registered that has not the approval of the British Resident and at least three of the Arikis noted thereon.

5. In all leases, whether to Maoris or foreigners, the Board, having due regard to the nature of the soil, may impose such conditions as to the number of cocoanut or other trees to be planted as they shall consider necessary in the interests of the island; and they may add clauses to the lease in order to prevent the wholesale destruction of valuable food-producing trees, and to preserve shade trees by the side of public roads.

6. No lease shall be registered until after fourteen days' notice has been given in the *Ioi Karanga* newspaper of the intention of the lessee to apply to the Board to confirm his lease; one insertion of such notice shall be sufficient.

7. All investigations of title and all the deliberations of the Board shall be held in open Court. The assent of the Board shall not be given unless the applicant can show that the outer boundaries of the land have been cut and marked out and assented to by the lessor and his neighbours on each side.

9. No land shall be leased to a foreigner which is in the beneficial occupation of a native of Rarotonga, nor shall the Board confirm a lease when it is shown that Maoris have been ejected from the land in order that it might be leased. The rights of the people who have occupied the soil of this island for twenty generations must be preserved.

9. When the Board has noticed its assent upon the instrument of lease, the land shall be surveyed at the expense of the lessee; the survey shall follow the boundaries given before the Board and described in the lease, and a plan of such survey shall be deposited with the Registrar of Deeds.

10. The lease shall in every instance set forth the following essentials:—

(a.) The period for which the land has been leased.