

This Act will, it is hoped, place the trade of the place on a better footing, since it places restrictions on the natural extravagance and dishonesty of the Maoris, and enables those traders who have outstanding debts, dating in some instances from 1883, to ascertain what proportion they are likely to collect.

#### Public Works.

The construction and maintenance of the roads and bridges of Rarotonga has been placed under the jurisdiction of the Au, or local council, of each district, their powers having been defined by the Au Empowering Act of 1899. By section 8 of this Act the Au may call out the whole or any part of the population of its district for a period not exceeding twelve days in each year, the only persons who can legally claim exemption being those who pay rates under the provisions of "The Public Works Rating Act, 1899." The rates payable under this Act are small, but sufficient to provide the timber for the construction of the bridges; and it is found that the Maoris not only recognise the necessity for good roads and bridges, but also work most cheerfully thereon, the law being merely an adaption of an old and time-honoured custom of the island, whereby the people were required to carry out any public work when called upon to do so by the Ariki of the district. The system has proved to be a most effective and inexpensive method of keeping the roads of the island in good order, and in Nga-Tangia, where it has been deemed necessary to construct an entirely new line of road, the tribe has of its own free will worked for many more than the twelve days for which they are liable by law.

#### Revenue.

The revenue returns for the financial year ending the 30th June, 1900, have been most satisfactory, the receipts exceeding the expenditure by no less than £976 18s. For the current year the expenditure has been estimated at £2,724 and the revenue at £3,486, and the returns for the first six months of the year show that the estimate has been more than maintained.

The details of the Federal revenue are given in Table I. for the year ending the 30th June, 1900, and the following is a summary of the receipts and expenditure for the past eight years:—

Year.	Revenue.			Expenditure.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
1892-93	...	...	...	825	9	0
1893-94	...	...	...	933	19	8
1894-95	...	...	...	860	17	4
1895-96	...	...	...	1,376	8	9
1896-97	...	...	...	1,441	0	8
1897-98	...	...	...	1,654	0	3
1898-99	...	...	...	1,439	9	5
1899-1900	...	...	...	1,402	12	5
	...	...	...	2,188	9	10

TABLE I.—REVENUE of the FEDERAL GOVERNMENT of the COOK ISLANDS for the Year ending 30th June, 1900, with Comparative Statement of Revenue for previous Seven Years.

Year.	Import Duties.			Postal.			Court Fees.			Trade Licenses.			Miscellaneous.			Total.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
1892-93	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	16	17	2	815	9	4
1893-94	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	24	14	5	1,246	7	1
1894-95	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	10	18	6	1,287	1	4
1895-96	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	19	9	6	1,428	17	1
1896-97	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	188	17	0	1,230	2	9
1897-98	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	13	15	0	1,321	19	7
1898-99	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	291	14	8	1,801	13	4
1899-1900	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	35	3	2	3,165	7	10

#### Vital Statistics.

I regret that I am unable to report any distinct improvement in the health of the Cook-Islanders. In the districts of Arorangi and Matavera of this island the deaths were nearly double the births, but in Avarua, where there is a medical officer, the death-rate was only thirty-two, as against forty-six births. In the Northern Islands the birth-rate is very small; but, fortunately, the deaths are even fewer in number. The following table is reliable:—

Place.	Births.	Deaths.	Marriages.	Population.
Rarotonga	...	...	...	...
Mangaia	...	...	...	...
Aitutaki	...	...	...	...
Penrhyn	...	...	...	...
Manihiki	...	...	...	...
Rakahanga	...	...	...	...
Pukapuka	...	...	...	...

Even the most remote islands of the Pacific would seem to have suffered from the same mysterious decrease of population, and to this rule Niue is not an exception. I submit a carefully compiled return which is the result of the experience of the London Mission in that island for the last twenty-five years.