

greater than that of any junior member of the *kopu tangata*, and so great is their respect for this old custom that it is well-nigh impossible to make those who are most deeply interested come forward and claim inclusion in the list of names. They are quite satisfied to have the names of one or two elders of the family placed on the Court records, and cheerfully ignore the possible legal effect of their own prejudices.

In the Takitumu district, under the Ariki Pa, we have the minimum of danger from these causes, from the fact that this district is divided into *taperes*, and subdivided among small families on well-recognised boundaries. Moreover, Pa, who has an intimate knowledge of his people, is always present to correct errors of omission; but even in this district I have had to suspend the issue of the title in several instances lest genuine owners should have been left out of the list of names. It is, however, in the Avarua district that the real difficulty has to be met. I have now an application from an important chief and landholder asking the Court to adjudicate upon a block of land of which he claims to be the sole owner. As to this claim there are many minor though important points to be considered, and two of the utmost importance—viz., can the chief of a tribe be considered in any other light than as trustee and joint owner in the tribal lands? And if it be found that he has a superior right then the question will be, is that right so strong as to justify him in excluding his own brothers and cousins from any block of land?

The ancient *mana* of a chief entitled him to place any of his followers on unoccupied tribal land, and so long as the person so placed in possession, or his family, lived and fulfilled the obligations of the gift, they were held to have an occupation right on the land; but if the family died out the land reverted to the tribe and Ariki. In many cases the grant endured only during the lifetime of the grantor. It may, indeed, be said that a life interest was the highest title ever recognised by the Maori of Polynesia. An Ariki might divide among his children the land he had actually held or cultivated by his servants or slaves, but he had no power to devise the tribal lands in the occupation of others, nor could he appoint his successor. It was the privilege of the elders of the tribe to appoint the Ariki, and that man would continue the distribution of the tribal lands in accordance with Native custom.

Such was the ancient system of Polynesia, and it does not seem expedient that the Land Titles Court should give the occupiers of the land a superior title to that which they originally possessed, and if I am not mistaken that title was that the Government, in the person of the Ariki, owned the land, subject to an undoubted right on the part of the tribe to occupy such lands under certain well-defined obligations of service to the Government. This overlordship should not be allowed to lapse. Where the rights of independent Mataiapos and their families are clear and undisputed the fee-simple may be awarded to them, but in all other cases it seems to me that no more than a life interest should be awarded, for in no other way can the interests of the small people and the Government be effectually guarded.

#### EDUCATION.

The education of the children of this Group is for the most part in the hands of the several religious fraternities. The London Mission has schools at Avarua, Matavera, Ngatangia, Titikaveka, and Arorangi. The Sisters of St. Joseph have a very good school at Avarua, where even music is taught, and the Seventh Day Adventists have a lady teacher who resides at Titikaveka, and has many pupils by reason of the fact that she makes the teaching of English the leading feature of her school.

Most important of all of these establishments is the High School at Tereora, where children from all of the islands of the Group are taken as boarders and given a really good education. During the past year four boys have been selected from this school and employed in the various stores of the island, and I have taken one as a cadet in the Survey Office, who promises to become a first-class draughtsman. The master, Mr. P. H. Hall, deserves very great credit for the good English taught in his school, and I feel assured that Tereora will be to the Cook Islands what Te Aute College is to the young Maoris of New Zealand.

A Native of Polynesia is apt to take a very practical view of education, and only values it for the advantages that may thereby accrue to the scholar. Until lately these prospective benefits have not been apparent to the Maori parent, and therefore many of the most influential people have not taken advantage of the education offered by Tereora; but the sudden demand for reliable and educated boys who can speak both English and Maori has altered all that. Makea is now sending her foster-children to Tereora, and the parents generally are alive to the fact that knowledge may be both power and money, two things that will never be despised in Polynesia.

The remarks I have made concerning Tereora will apply in a slightly less degree to the Araura School of Aitutaki. This institution is of recent date, but under the management of the Misses Royle, is doing good work, while the Rev. Mr. Jones, with characteristic energy and benevolence, prepares the younger children for Araura.

At Mangaia the Rev. Bond James is engaged in the same good work, and it may safely be said that wherever the European members of the mission are engaged in the teaching, the education given is quite up to the requirements of the Islands. This remark can only apply to Rarotonga, Aitutaki, and Mangaia. At Atiu, Mauke, and Mitiaro, where there are no European missionaries, the education of the children must of necessity be left in the hands of the Native teachers. In these cases it is, however, possible to render assistance at a very small cost to the Group, and I propose to employ a few of the smartest boys from Tereora as teachers at a sum not exceeding £20 per annum each, a salary that will be regarded as absolute wealth.

For the last eight years we have given an annual subsidy to Tereora of £2 10s. per scholar, provided that not more than fifty scholars were taught in the school. This subsidy was paid with