

The overlord is said to own the land, be he Ariki or Mataiapo; but from the earliest times it has been recognised that all the descendants of these overlords who have continued to occupy the land have an inalienable right therein.

The position of the Komono is in many respects scarcely inferior to that of his overlord; but with this exception, that there is in every instance an obligation on the part of the Komono to do or pay something in recognition of the fact that he is not the *Atu enua* (lord of the land). Waimahanga is the ancestral *tapere* of Pa Ariki, but as the land was in excess of that required for his own use, he gave a portion to each of the following Mataiapos: Terei, Raina, Tamakeu, Poati, Te Aia, and Nia: and by virtue of this gift each of these men became Komono of Pa on Waimahanga, though they were Mataiapos on other lands. When this *tapere* was brought before the Court Pa recognised these men as absolute owners, subject to the obligations to which the land had always been subject. A Komono is a sort of feudal baron who has received a portion of an estate in consideration of his having engaged to defend the whole against all comers. Such a man might be a near relative of the overlord, and as such have rights on the land apart from his komonship, or he might be a stranger to the family owning the land, but valuable by reason of a large family of valiant sons whose presence would insure the peaceful occupation of the estate. But, whatever his status, once he was installed his right could not be questioned, nor could he be ejected so long as he fulfilled the obligation of building or repairing the chief's house.

The Kiato is but an inferior sort of Komono, whose ancestor has been given the right to occupy a piece of land under much the same feudal arrangement as described in the case of the Komono; but as the Kiato was almost always a man of less social and political importance than the latter, it may be conceded that his rights were less assured, but such a man had generally a family right on the land, in addition to that acquired by long occupation as a Kiato.

The Unga is the lowest class of Polynesian, for his very name signifies that he has no rights. "Unga" is the name given to the hermit-crab. Such a man would merely occupy the land on sufferance, and work for the owner, receiving in return a bare subsistence. There are at present not more than twenty such families in the island, and in every instance where it has been shown that the Unga has had long occupation I have held that he had a right to be enrolled among the owners.

Another very influential class is that known as the Rangatiras, that is, the junior members of the Ariki families. These men have in almost every instance inherited portions of the Ariki estate, and are therefore independent of the reigning Ariki, and cannot be called upon to do any service other than repairing or building the Ariki's house. It is on this point only that there is a difference of opinion between Makea and the Rangatiras. She holds that she is entitled to call upon them for general service, while the Rangatiras, aided by the independent tribes, deny her excessive jurisdiction over them, and will not admit that they owe allegiance to any one but His Majesty. The quarrel in this case is not as to whom the land belongs to, but as to the class of servitude attached to it. Pa Ariki strongly supported the claim of the Rangatiras, and I think there can be but little doubt that the ancestors of Makea never had the power she now claims.

The system of land tenure existing in this island is not responsible for the numerous cases of injustice perpetrated under innovations that are all of late date. For the last sixty years both Arikis and Mataiapos have encroached on the rights of the people by claiming the sole ownership of the lands, and ignoring the fact that they were merely trustees for the family. Those who refused to submit to food and labour exactions, which were unknown in the pre-mission days, have been turned off their lands, and have lived more or less on charity for the last twenty years. During the hearing of the claims in the Tupapa *tapere*, the oppressions of Taraare were a prominent feature of the case. Whole families of thirty or forty people had been driven from the land, simply because they would not submit to his exactions. Ngati-Ara and Ngati-Pi, numbering over fifty people, had been treated in this manner. Enua, the true descendant of the Vakapora family, had been turned off his own special piece of land, and Iotea was ignored on the Tamaiva lands. These men and women, numbering some sixty or seventy souls, have now been reinstated in their rights.

More than one-half of the available land of Rarotonga has now been awarded to the rightful owners under a title that is practically unassailable, and the result is already manifest, for the grantees now for the first time realise the benefit of security of tenure, and have of late displayed habits of industry and an interest in the land that their previous habits had not given us reason to anticipate.

The Native of Rarotonga is altering in a very marked degree, and it will shortly be admitted by all that he is anything but a lazy man, and that he merely requires the ordinary incentive of knowing that some benefit will accrue to him for work done. Since the survey of the Tukuvaie and Avatiu Valleys, the planting of bananas has become a serious business with the people of these valleys, and they have not only realised the necessity for good roads, but have devoted themselves to the gravelling and formation of these by-roads. This is but one of many circumstances that show that the Maoris appreciate the changes now taking place, and their intention to prepare their produce for the market with as little damage as possible. In my opinion nothing has proved more beneficial to the Natives than the example of certain Europeans, who, having succeeded in leasing lands from the Native owners in Titikaveka, have at once planted and improved the land in a systematic manner. It is the example of these men that has brought about the banana-planting in Avarua.

That there is room for European settlement in this island must be obvious to the meanest capacity, for there are at least 2,000 acres of the coral-sand cocoanut land lying absolutely waste. The Natives themselves have recognised this fact, for on page 14 of A.—3, 1895, will be found a resolution of the Council and a letter from Mr. Moss to His Excellency the Governor affirming the principle I have endeavoured to carry out. Unfortunately, the agents of the London Mission have succeeded in impressing their views on the Natives, to the effect that there is not sufficient land for