

where the Resident Agent, practically single-handed, has postal, Customs, shipping, and other work all crowded on him during the few hours the steamer's stay extends to, but even there I think smuggling would not amount to more than odd bottles. Native police are always told off to watch, and any quantity of liquor would be detected.

WHETHER IT IS POSSIBLE TO PROHIBIT THE ENGAGEMENT OF LABOUR FOR THE VESSELS OF THE UNION STEAMSHIP COMPANY.

It would no doubt be desirable to do so, as it seriously depletes the supply of local labour for plantations and shipping work, and also has an injurious effect on the health and morals of the men taken away to Tahiti and elsewhere. Fifty or sixty able-bodied men are practically continuously absent from Rarotonga. It is possible, but not, I think, practicable, to prohibit it altogether. It could be done so far as the mail-boats are concerned, and that is where the chief mischief occurs. The mail-boats call nowhere in the Group except at Rarotonga. They take labourers to Tahiti and leave them there for about ten days till arrival of mail-steamer from San Francisco, which brings the men back to Rarotonga. The men are left to their own devices in Tahiti, and have every opportunity and temptation to get into mischief, and this Group benefits not at all. I do not know why the Union Company cannot get their labour for Tahiti at Tahiti itself. The position with regard to the Auckland steamer is different. She calls always at two and usually at three islands besides Rarotonga. To require each of these islands to provide labour to work the ship as well as transport fruit and cargo to and from the shore would, I think, lead to difficulties. At Mauke certainly it would be impossible. At the other islands it might be done, but at great risk of delay. The vessel cannot wait, and any hitch would mean leaving cargo, probably perishable fruit. That happens quite too often as it is, through unsuitable weather for working the reefs. Freights would surely rise. Ship labourers would earn less than those engaged in transport, hence there would be an objection to act in former capacity, and an acute dispute would mean perhaps the whole of the cargo being left behind. Moreover, the labourers on this vessel have little time to get into mischief: they are kept too hard at work. The ship stays only twenty-four hours at Tahiti, and the men have to discharge and reload in that time. On the way up to Tahiti they have to trim coal. They must want rest more than anything else in their limited spare time while there. At our own islands they do not get ashore at all, as the vessel leaves directly her cargo is aboard.

On the question whether medical inspection should take place before or after departure of labourers I have consulted the Chief Medical Officer. These precautions, he points out, might have a good effect were Rarotonga itself clear of venereal disease—the only thing really to be feared. But it is very far from so being. He sees no object in inspection before departure. As for inspection on return, while there is no objection to it, it would be futile so far as the Auckland steamer is concerned, because no form of the disease is at all likely to show itself in the five days taken by the steamer to return here from Tahiti, and even with the mail-steamer most cases would be latent at the end of, at the most, eleven or twelve days. Your own medical knowledge will no doubt confirm this. Of course, all vessels from outside the Group undergo the usual Health Officers' inspection before any one can land. It would appear, therefore, that only if the mail-boats are permitted to continue taking labour would special medical examination be of any value.

While on this subject I may say that though there is no express provision for so doing, I requested the Health Officers to medically inspect the sailing-vessels returning from the Northern Islands after their stay at Penrhyn during the hurricane season—this with a view to leprosy. Every passenger from these islands has to bring a certificate from the Resident Agent that such passenger is free from leprosy and is not known to belong to a leper family, but that precaution, though valuable, is not all-sufficient.

WHETHER THE NATIVE PEOPLE ARE LAW-ABIDING OR OTHERWISE.

I regard them as in the highest degree orderly and law-abiding. Apart from bush-beer drinking they give little trouble. At picture-shows, meetings, and other assemblies their behaviour is almost invariably excellent. I am constantly travelling the roads both by day and night, and very rarely have observed anything in the least objectionable. The tendency of the Native mind is not towards disorder. I am quite aware that there have been cases of such and even crimes of violence, but where is the community that is altogether free from crime or disorder? I do not claim that this is Utopia, but I do say that my opening remark is justified. The place is very far indeed from being the hotbed of drink or disorder that I have seen suggested in newspapers. I am convinced that such statements have been made either under an entire misapprehension or for ulterior motives—I trust the former. Horse-play, the result of high animal spirits, among the young people may at times have been mistaken for disorder or drunkenness. I have seen it occasionally myself. There is not, to my mind, the slightest need for any European to apprehend molestation or insult by day or night. I would far rather my wife or daughters went about Rarotonga unescorted at night than about the side streets of a New Zealand town. They will run no risk of offence here.

There is plenty of corroboration of my views of the Natives' conduct. Chief Detective McIlveney, of New Zealand, who came here with me and remained about five weeks, expressed himself to me in the highest terms of the orderly behaviour of the Natives. Mr. Wright, an English visitor deeply interested in mission work, who recently left here after a month's stay, said the same thing. Mr. Stevenson, Mr. Blaine, Mr. Kohn, Mr. Sharpe, Mr. Percy Brown, all residents of long standing and in daily intercourse with the Natives, have all expressed themselves favourably in regard to the general behaviour of the people. Such disorder as has taken place in Rarotonga is mainly caused by people from other islands, including Niue. I think power