

1913.  
NEW ZEALAND.

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COOK ISLANDS:  
REPORT OF ACTING RESIDENT COMMISSIONER.

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*Laid on the Table by Leave of the House.*

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SIR,—

Cook Islands Administration, Rarotonga, 7th November, 1912.

In accordance with your instructions I have the honour to submit the following report :—

Before discussing the various questions referred to in your letter of instructions I think it well to remind you of the financial position. The revenue of the Islands is already strained to breaking-point. Expenditure has exceeded revenue for several years past, and will certainly do so this year, while many public works of the highest importance yet remain to be undertaken, and unless by an increase of direct taxation I see little prospect of a materially larger revenue. Without such taxation I am of opinion that the revenue has reached nearly, if not quite to, high-water mark for a good many years to come. The Native population, if not dwindling in numbers, is at least stationary, and there is little room for any large influx of whites. The market for fruit is confined to New Zealand, and apparently as much fruit is now produced as can be profitably disposed of there. Hence there will be no great expansion of trade in that direction. The destruction of bananas caused by the hurricanes of recent years in other Pacific Islands, from which disasters the Cook Islands have fortunately been comparatively free, very greatly assisted the banana trade in this Group, but that factor in its prosperity will not endure. Moreover, the area suitable for banana-cultivation is limited, and much of it is becoming exhausted by constant use, the bunches being much smaller than formerly. A large proportion of the orange-trees are old, and renewals are needed to fill the places of those past bearing. But the question of market is the all-important one, and it is on that account that I consider that the export of fruit will not materially increase in value, even if it does in quantity. In my view the great future asset of the Group will be copra, for which there is an unlimited market, and of which much more could be produced. But it takes about ten years to bring a coconut-tree to the copra-producing stage; therefore, although a good deal of coconut-planting is being done, and much more might be done, it will be some years before the effect of it is apparent in increased value of exports, and, incidentally, of increased revenue. The Natives are being urged in all the islands to plant their lands with coconuts, but it is very difficult to make them appreciate the reward of industry when that reward is so far off. Much more coffee might be grown, but there are no immediate signs of its being done. Though no one would be better pleased than I would were I shown to be wrong, I believe myself to be on solid ground in expressing these views, which I do in no pessimistic spirit, as to the future of the Islands, but to justify me in saying that the cost of systematic and organized attention to the health, morals, and education of the people of these Islands will have to be mainly borne by New Zealand, it being obvious that such cost will be no light matter. You will observe that I use the words "direct taxation" as the only means of increase of revenue. I do so because I feel assured that Parliament will not consent to any special Customs tariff for the Islands. Purely from the Islands standpoint such a method would be the fairest and by far the most economical. A special surcharge or primage duty on certain articles, in addition to the existing tariff, would be paid by everybody, and would cost little or nothing to collect, whereas to get in direct taxation from Natives scattered over so many islands will be an expensive and difficult process. There is no doubt that the Natives can well afford some extra taxation. But, of course, the Island standpoint is not the only one: the producer in New Zealand proper has to be considered, but he would still have the protection of the New Zealand Customs tariff as against foreign competition here.

I think it right to put before you the very strong opinion held here that Cook Islands producers are discriminated against as compared with producers in New Zealand proper. It is contended that the Islands, though annexed to and forming part of New Zealand, are, in respect of Customs protection, treated as such only where it benefits New Zealand proper. The New Zealand producer has protection for everything he ships here: the revenue would increase by at least £3,000 per annum if he had to pay the same duty as outsiders. The fruitgrower in New Zealand proper has special tariff protection against the competition of outsiders. The fruitgrower in New Zealand Cook Islands has no protection. He has to compete against fruit from the French Islands and everywhere else. This does not only affect shippers and traders. The better price the shipper and trader can get the better price the Native producer gets. It vitally affects the whole community. Cheap fruit for the people of New Zealand is eminently desirable, but the point made is that if fruitgrowers in New Zealand proper are entitled to protection, then the fruitgrowers here, being also of New Zealand, should get it too. Incidentally it is contended that the effect of a protecting tax on outside fruit would be to regulate the market, would enable much larger quantities to be profitably grown here than can now be done, and that the price to the consumer would not in point of fact be increased, because the increased output from here would fill the place of the foreign fruit shut out by the tariff. All this, of course, is highly debatable matter, and I am not prepared to express any decided opinion with my present somewhat superficial knowledge of the whole subject, but no harm can be done by laying before you the arguments I have indicated.

As to the matters referred to in your letter of instructions:—

#### IMPORTATION AND SALE OF LIQUOR.

The law regulating the importation and sale of liquor will be found in sections 274 to 283 of the Licensing Act, 1908, of New Zealand. These sections take the place of and are practically identical with sections 19 and 28 of the Licensing Acts Amendment Act, 1904. Regulations under section 28 of that Act were made by His Excellency on the 8th February, 1906, and published in the *Cook Islands Gazette* of the 20th March, 1906. These regulations are preserved in force by section 2 of the Licensing Act, 1908. By notification dated the 27th February, 1906, appearing in the *Cook Islands Gazette* of the 22nd May, 1906, the Hon. Minister in Charge notified that His Excellency had been pleased to appoint Mr. Stevenson (the Collector of Customs at Rarotonga) to be the officer at Rarotonga for the sale or supply of liquor under the provisions of section 22 of the Licensing Acts Amendment Act, 1904 (replaced by section 277 of the Licensing Act, 1908). This appointment also is preserved in force by section 2 of the last-named Act. Mr. Stevenson, therefore, in his dual capacity of Collector of Customs and officer for sale or supply of liquor, has for over six years been in sole charge of all liquor imported by private persons under section 276 of the Licensing Act, 1908, or by the Government for sale under section 277. From a memorandum addressed by him to me recently I extract the following:—

“All imported liquor is consigned to me as Collector of Customs, and on arrival is put into bond until duty and any other charges are paid. If the importer is a trustworthy person and does not indulge to excess I give him delivery of his case of spirits or other liquor if he so desires. Many of them, however, prefer to keep it in bond and come for it as they require it. There are only about a dozen men on the island who have this privilege. If I have the slightest suspicion that any importer will abuse the privilege of having a quantity of liquor in his possession I retail it out to him in quantities of one or two bottle of spirits weekly, and a dozen pint bottles of beer or half a dozen bottles of claret. If I find that any one is abusing it on such limited quantities I cut him off.

“I have given this liquor business much thought, and I cannot see that the present system can be much improved upon, unless total prohibition is introduced. I would not recommend a schedule fixing the quantities to be delivered to any person in a stated time, because some persons who consumed very little would take advantage of the full quantity in the schedule and probably dispose of it. No doubt there are occasional cases of overindulgence on the part of one or two whites, but I think such cases are few and far between. I do all in my power to check such lapses if I can obtain any definite statement.

“I attach a return showing the quantity of liquor imported and delivered to white people during the year ended 30th September. I do not think the quantity is excessive, taking everything into consideration. I maintain that as long as a person is not giving liquor to Natives, or abusing it, I cannot very well refuse him. It is not part of my duty to discourse on the evils of liquor, but to see that the law is fairly administered. I supervise all deliveries of liquor imported by Europeans myself. If liquor is sent to any of the islands of the Group it is sent to the Resident Agent, who has instructions to retail it out in such quantities as he thinks expedient.”

Mr. Stevenson in these remarks refers to privately imported liquor only. In referring to liquor sold under section 277 he says,—

“During the last two years liquor has been sold only on the production of a medical certificate. When prescribing liquor as a medicine the Government doctors use form No. 1 attached, and Dr. Dawson, who is in private practice here and has no power to issue a certificate, uses form No. 2. I issue the liquor on his recommendation that it is to be used medicinally. I might state that I have accepted a few recommendations from Dr. Story, who was formerly in the Government employ, and who has occasionally required some stout for his family. As regards delivery, I handle all permits except those of the Government doctors. Permits coming from the Government Hospital I allow my assistant to give delivery. It is done under my eye, for we are in the office together.

"I attach a return showing the number of permits issued by each medical man during the year, also a return showing the quantity of liquor sold on permits.

"Rarotonga is the only island in the Group in which liquor is sold. Some of the Resident Agents would like to have a stock of liquor to dispense to the Natives on the out-islands, but I have always turned a deaf ear to such proposals, for the system is apt to be gradually abused.

"The police sergeant and a Native constable are on watch while vessels are in port, and the baggage of returned labour and passengers is searched, but very seldom indeed is any liquor found. If any does happen to be dropped upon it is confiscated, and the person is prosecuted.

"In conclusion, I might state that it is my honest opinion that there is very little drunkenness nowadays from imported liquor.

"Return showing the Quantity of Liquor imported by and delivered to White Persons during the Year ended 30th September, 1912.

	Quantity in Gallons.
Whisky .....	219
Brandy .....	2
Gin .....	36
Rum .....	32
Beer .....	306
Stout .....	126
Claret .....	370
Port .....	2
Hock .....	4

"Return showing the Quantity of Liquor sold on Permits issued by each Medical Man in Rarotonga during the Year ended 30th September, 1912.

	Quantity in Gallons.								
	Beer.	Whisky.	Claret.	Brandy.	Gin.	Rum.	Sparkling Wine.	Port Wine.	Stout.
Dr. Baldwin .. ..	4	23	16	7	30	3	1	4	29
Dr. Dawson .. ..	5	6½	1	1½	9	..	..	2	..
Dr. Maclurkin .. ..	..	2½	2	1	3	..	..	1	..
Dr. Story .. ..	6	3	..	..	..	..	..	..	2
Dr. Perceval .. ..	2	..	2	..	..	..	..	..	1
Totals .. ..	17	35	21	9½	42	3		7	32

"Return showing the Number of Permits issued by Medical Men in Rarotonga during the Year ended 30th September, 1912.

Month.	Dr. Baldwin.	Dr. Maclurkin.	Dr. Dawson.	Dr. Perceval.	Dr. Story.
October .. ..	7	..	9	5	6
November .. ..	15	..	11	..	8
December .. ..	76	..	12	..	..
January .. ..	47	..	10	..	..
February .. ..	35	..	15	..	..
March .. ..	25	..	9	..	..
April .. ..	14	24	15	..	..
May .. ..	36	15	8	..	..
June .. ..	33	1	10	..	1
July .. ..	44	..	3	..	..
August .. ..	38	..	8	..	..
September .. ..	11	4	1	..	1
	381	44	111	5	16

"W. J. STEVENSON,  
Collector of Customs.

"Rarotonga, Cook Islands, 24th October, 1912."

My personal experience and the information I have gained lead me to very much the same conclusions as Mr. Stevenson has expressed. I have given prominence to his views because of his long experience in the special duties imposed by the Licensing Acts. I am satisfied that he would not countenance any abuse of liquor. I entirely agree with him that little drunkenness is caused by imported liquor, especially among Natives. Of eighty-five convictions for drunkenness during the past six months, only one case, that of a European, was found to be caused by

imported liquor. Inquiry was necessary in each case because of the difference between the penalties prescribed by law in regard to ordinary drunkenness and those for making or drinking bush-beer. It appears to me that the present method of control is quite sufficient to prevent the abuse of liquor if care and vigilance be exercised. In one respect it has seemed to me that Mr. Stevenson did not quite appreciate his position. He informed me that he considered that any authority issued in terms of section 278 by any of the officers there mentioned was conclusive, and that he could not challenge it in any way. I advised him that such was not my opinion; that section 278 must be read with section 277, and that he as the statutory officer appointed under the latter section, and responsible for the observance of its provisions, would be well within his rights and his duty in referring any authority issued under section 278 back to the issuing officer if there was any ground for suspecting an evasion of the Act, or that the issuing officer had been misled or was unaware of any fact that should be brought to his notice before the authority was acted on. Mr. Stevenson said that this view of the matter had not been previously put to him, but that he fully accepted it and would act upon it in future; also, on my suggestion, that he would personally supervise all sales and deliveries of liquor whatsoever in future. The Resident Medical Officers have expressed themselves as only too pleased to have their authority scrutinized as indicated. As to the return given by Mr. Stevenson showing the number of what are locally known as "permits"—i.e., authorities to sell liquor issued by the various doctors—the total certainly seems to me to be fairly large, but the matter is one which is peculiarly within the province of the medical men. It is to be borne in mind that the numbers given include Europeans as well as Natives, and that one individual may have quite a number of permits in the course of twelve months, so that the total number of permits by no means represents the same number of persons.

#### BUSH-BEER.

In forming an opinion as to whether there is any increase in the drinking of bush-beer by Natives, my own knowledge, apart from hearsay, is from perusal of Court and other records. Of the people with whom I have discussed the question it appears to me that, as a rule, those who have been long resident in the Islands hold the opinion that bush-beer drinking is not increasing. One resident, not an official, on whose views I place some reliance, said to me, "There is actually much less drinking than formerly, but it has changed in character. Formerly the middle-aged and elderly men used to drink largely, but they did so in discreet fashion and were not much seen or noticed. Young men rarely indulged. But in recent years, while the elders are less addicted to the habit, the younger men seem to have taken to it to some extent, and they are less careful of appearances than their elders were." I have myself observed that the great majority of those charged before me with drinking bush-beer were quite young men. But other residents of long standing declare that ten years ago bush-beer drinking was much more in evidence than at the present time. Having regard to all the information that has been available to me, I have come to the conclusion that bush-beer drinking is decreasing rather than increasing, but it would be idle to deny that a good deal still takes place at certain seasons of the year. A return which I have had prepared by the Registrar of the High Court showing the convictions for bush-beer making and drinking and for drunkenness during the six months ended 30th September last is somewhat instructive. This return shows,—

April	...	...	1 case, involving 1 person.
May	...	...	7 cases, involving 15 persons.
June	...	...	13 cases, involving 16 persons.
July	...	...	16 cases, involving 32 persons.
August	...	...	13 cases, involving 18 persons.
September	...	...	3 cases, involving 3 persons.

Since the 30th September there has been no arrest for drunkenness or bush-beer drinking or making. All these convictions except one, that of the European already referred to, were for bush-beer making or drinking. The European case took place at Titikaveka settlement, ten miles from headquarters at Avarua, and was apparently caused by overindulgence in his allowance of liquor imported by himself in terms of section 276. His liquor was promptly stopped. The figures in the return do not mean that the police were inactive before May and after August. The four months, May to August, cover the period during which oranges are ripe and fit for bush-beer making. Further comment is unnecessary. When ripe pineapples become plentiful then I fear the Court figures will again increase. In June I temporarily employed an extra Native constable of previous experience in Aitutaki. He left in July. Subsequently the man in charge of live-stock has been detailed for duty as special constable on Saturday evenings and Sundays.

Entire suppression of the practice will be a very difficult matter. Though Rarotonga is not a large island it is extremely well adapted for hiding-places. It is a network of gullies and steep hills densely vegetated. Every orange or banana tree or pine-apple-bush is a potential brewery, and practically nothing else is needed but a receptacle for the liquor. If a man is determined to make it he can readily evade observation. Indulgence in liquor of an intoxicating nature is a very ancient custom of these people, and it is correspondingly difficult to convince them that it is wrong: "When Makea-te-Pa-atua-kino was lying drunk with kava," said a witness before me in the Land Court. This Ariki lived three generations before the arrival of the missionaries. They always had trouble over and were continually warring against the habit. You will find the expression "bush-beer" used in the translation of laws of Rarotonga appearing in Mr. Moss's report of 1891 (in parliamentary paper A.—3 of 1891), Law XVI, showing that it was then well known. These laws were printed at the Mission press in 1879. Spiritual influence,

moral suasion, and punishment have all failed to do more than minimize the practice. Opinions have differed, and I suppose will continue differ, as to whether it is a serious vice. Lieut.-Colonel Gudgeon evidently did not think it was, as he imposed very light fines—5s. in many cases, rarely more than 10s. Money, however, was worth much more to the Natives then. The Rev. J. J. K. Hutchin declared that this was equivalent to giving a license to drink, but Colonel Gudgeon apparently remained unconvinced. Captain Smith inflicted heavier fines—from £1 to £2. When I arrived here I made a point of discussing this question with Rev. Mr. James, then missionary, inviting his co-operation and asking for suggestions. He admitted the difficulties, and could get no further than increased penalties. I decided to try that course, and after a warning from the Bench made it a rule to impose a fine of £2 for a first offence, and the maximum penalty allowed by law—i.e., £5 (section 279, Licensing Act, 1908)—for any second offence within six months. There were three or four cases in which I had to inflict the maximum fine, yet I am doubtful whether it has had any real or lasting effect, though I am assured by other people that it has.

The figures I have given of the convictions for six months are very nearly equal to those for the whole of the previous year, and we have yet to cope with the pineapple season. Except for the temporary appointments I have referred to, the Police Force is the same in number and personnel as in the previous year, and I have no reason to suppose that they did not do their duty then, as I believe them to be doing it now, always with the limitation that the Native policeman, with his infinitesimal pay, is practically a volunteer, and, subject as he is to local and family influences, needs to be a man of considerable energy and force of character to efficiently and impartially carry out his duties, and men possessing such qualities are not easy to obtain. A second European constable, as suggested by you, would, of course, be a great help, but if bush-beer drinking *can* be put down altogether it will, in my opinion, be necessary, in order to effectually attempt it, to make the offence punishable by imprisonment without option of a fine if the Court thinks that advisable, and it will be necessary to have at least four white policemen, one for each main settlement (about five miles apart), and they should be mounted men, as obviously foot men cannot efficiently patrol more than the actual settlements. That is for Rarotonga alone. Bush-beer drinking goes on in the other islands also, notably at Mangaia. Little is heard of it because there are few white residents, and it has not led to any serious crime, but it exists nevertheless. Residents Agents, with their Native police, do their best to suppress it, and in my opinion do wonderfully well under the circumstances.

To return to Rarotonga: Four mounted police would, I suppose, cost somewhere about £800 a year, which expense is not, to my mind, warranted. I would prefer to continue the attempt to keep the evil within bounds. If a second white constable is decided upon would it not be practicable to lend to the Islands a mounted police officer during the orange season—say, from May to August, inclusive? In this way the benefit of an experienced man, otherwise difficult to get, would be had at a minimum of expense during the time when the evil is most prevalent. It is true that liquor is made during the pineapple season—say, from middle of November till February—but I am advised that the amount is comparatively small both because the fruit is scarce and more valuable than oranges, and because the liquor is more troublesome to make.

I have, I fear, been prolix upon this particular subject, but in view of the attention recently directed to it I desired to fully set out the results of my observation and experience. I quote a paragraph from Mr. Moss's report previously referred to (A.-3, 1891, page 20: "Careful inquiry leads me to believe that early sexual excesses, the introduction of new diseases, the absence of healthy mental stimulus, and the too sudden adoption of European dwellings, habits, and clothing are doing far more than intoxicating liquor to destroy the race." That is equally true to-day. I shall have a little to say on the subject of sexual excesses and other matters referred to by Mr. Moss later on in my report.

In conclusion, bush-beer drinking is not greatly noticeable in public. I have seen very little indeed of it personally—an odd case along the road or at the gathering outside the picture-shows is the extent of my own experience. If it had been so greatly prevalent in the villages, as I have seen it asserted, it is strange that I have not noticed it more, seeing that my attention had been so strongly directed to the practice.

#### WHETHER THERE IS ANY EVIDENCE THAT EUROPEANS ARE FREQUENTLY SEEN DRUNK IN THE STREETS.

I am satisfied that such a thing would be an extremely rare occurrence. I have never seen a drunken European myself, but I have heard of two cases. One I have already referred to; the other was a member of the crew of a vessel, who was put on board and left with his ship. The number of Europeans in Rarotonga who are prone to excess is very limited. They are well known, and I have already shown that care is taken to limit their supply of liquor. They or others may overindulge in the privacy of their homes or plantations, but that there is no law to prevent so long as no annoyance is caused to the public.

#### SMUGGLING.

I have already quoted the Collector of Customs' opinion. So far as Rarotonga is concerned I do not see how the smuggling of liquor can be carried on to any extent. All baggage is inspected for Customs, hence smuggled liquor would need to be carried on the person. The Native's ordinary attire of shirt and trousers or shirt and *pareu* does not readily lend itself to this, and strict watch is kept on their landing. A surprise search was made by the Collector of Customs last week. Each labourer returning by "Moana" was called upon to submit to personal search for liquor, but nothing was found. I do not feel so confident about some of the outlying islands

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

should be taken to send a person who misconducts himself back to his own island in addition to any other punishment to which he may be liable. This cannot be done at present, though criminals may be deported from the Islands altogether with consent of the Governor.

I do not observe any discontent among the Natives. Certainly they have no general cause for any, though it would be strange if there were no individuals who thought they had grievances. The Arikis and chiefs have expressed themselves well satisfied, and they ought to be. They have a large share of their own government, much is being done for the health and prosperity of the people, and they are in fact exceedingly prosperous.

#### THE LAND QUESTION.

I take it that what is wanted is a statement as to the position of land titles. Prior to my arrival here practically no Land Court work, beyond formal orders, had been done for over two years and a half: hence the work was greatly in arrears. I arrived on the 15th February, but owing to having to preside at the Noongo trial for murder, and the necessity of giving notice to the Natives of the Land Court sittings, I was not able to open the latter Court until the 7th March. Thenceforward I held regular sittings until my departure for the outlying islands on the 8th July. I found the number of days on which I could sit in Land Court very much reduced by the fact that I had to devote one day a week to High Court work, that the Natives would not attend Court on Saturdays, it being their food-gathering day and always free from Courts in the past, and that for about two days before the departure of each New Zealand steamer every Native was engaged in gathering and shipping his fruit, and it was useless to try to get them to attend Court. But on these occasions I had usually plenty to do with correspondence and general administration work.

I found that a great deal of work in the direction of investigation of titles had already been done in Rarotonga, the holdings as a rule being of very small size. Apart from the land attached to the Ariki and Mataiapo titles, a good many names are included in most of the titles, and no partition work has been done in such cases, the Natives apparently having been content with the communal title until recently. The more intelligent are now beginning to appreciate the advantages of owning their land in severalty, or, at all events, in family holdings, and are consequently seeking partition. I was engaged for a considerable time in the settlement of the numerous and valuable interests held by the late Makea Takau Ariki and the late Makea Daniela Vakatini. These lands had been awarded by the Court for life only, with a proviso that at death the Court should ascertain the true owners in each case. Thus instead of succession cases each interest became really the subject of an investigation of title occupying much more time to hear and determine.

I heard a considerable number of other cases, investigations of titles, partitions, successions, confirmation of alienations, and miscellaneous applications. There was a much larger percentage of contested cases than is usual in the Native Land Court in New Zealand. A number of applications were made to me to reopen cases previously decided, and in which no appeal had been lodged. Some of these, which were for amendment of errors which all parties admitted to have occurred, I was able to deal with in the course of other proceedings affecting the same land—*e.g.*, on succession orders. Where, however, the complaint went to the merits I obviously had no jurisdiction to deal with it. I decided, however, that I would hear the different applications with the idea that if it were clearly shown that a judgment was wrong I would make some recommendation in the direction of obtaining a rehearing or right of appeal. I am unable to say, however, that in any case I was satisfied that there was not evidence which would justify the decision. Hence, though I do not say that in every case I would necessarily have decided as the former Court did, I am unable to recommend any of these cases being reopened, at considerable expense to all parties and to the State, feeling that an appellate Court, following the recognized rule that a judgment should not be disturbed unless demonstrably wrong, would be very unlikely to make any material alteration. And I could plainly see that if the door be once opened to fresh litigation of this description there will be a very large number of similar applications on the "try-fluke" idea, so dear to the heart of a Maori.

In the month of June I despatched the Government Surveyor, Mr. Connal, to Aitutaki to prepare surveys for Court sittings there, and I arrived there myself on the 15th July. I have already given you a report (L2/1912/373), of 26th September, on my visit to that island, and to Mangaia, Mauke, Mitiaro, and Atiu, which it is needless to recapitulate here.

Since my return to Rarotonga on the 15th September I have not been able to do a great deal of Land Court work. In addition to being myself greatly engaged with the High Court and general administration work, I am practically at a standstill in the Land Court pending completion of surveys. Mr. Connal is Government Engineer as well as Surveyor, and after his absence of over three months on survey work at Aitutaki it has been imperative that he should devote most of his time to public works before the rainy season sets in, and there is no one else here who can carry out surveys. I hope, however, to get some more work disposed of before leaving for New Zealand. I think nearly if not quite all the very urgent cases in point of time have been dealt with. The total number of orders made by me is 347. Total fees charged, £321 5s. Fees imposed are very light. No hearing fee is provided for in the regulations, so that fees in a long case are the same as in a short one.

As to the future, a considerable amount of work yet remains to be done in Rarotonga, as fresh applications have been coming in. There are seventy-six applications now lodged remaining undealt with, including twenty-seven investigations and thirty-three partitions. These all require survey. In the past the boundary-lines of the different pieces of land have been carried back only a certain distance from the sea so as to include the flat land but only a little of the hills. The

Natives are now beginning to appreciate the fact that the back land, though not so good as the front, has a value, and are applying to have the ownership determined. Also, as previously stated, they are applying for partitions. I have already reported as to the work in the other "near" islands. There is, I am informed, a little work in the Northern Islands, which I have not been able to visit, and the Natives desire a Court, but it can scarcely be of great urgency. If a Judge is to be sent down next year he will probably be occupied three or four months with the work now in sight in the different islands, provided that proper provision is made for prior survey.

I have found that the system of survey and Court work proceeding at the same time was unsatisfactory to the Natives, who declared that they were prejudiced by it, and it is quite possible that cases might occur where they would be, though I took every precaution. It seems to me that Mr. Connal will have to be provided temporarily with an assistant surveyor if the work is to be gone on with. He cannot possibly carry out single-handed both public works and surveys in all the islands.

There are at present two appeals ripe for hearing, one from a decision of Lieut.-Colonel Gudgeon and one from a decision of my own. Two Judges are required to hear them. There is no urgency for hearing, and I will be prepared, with your approval, to make a suggestion in that direction later on. Though I understand the new Resident Commissioner is not to undertake Land Court work, it will be necessary, I think, to appoint him a Judge of the Land Titles Court so as to have some one to deal with formal urgent matters. It would, I consider, be an advantage to have a provision added to the Order in Council establishing the Land Titles Court of a similar nature to the "assembled owners" provisions in the Native Land Act, 1909, of New Zealand. It would much facilitate future leases. Owners are usually numerous in proportion to the size of the holdings, and to obtain all their signatures is sometimes impracticable and always difficult. I cannot at present think of any other points in connection with this subject to which I can usefully direct your attention.

#### EDUCATION.

This is a subject on which I think you should obtain a report by an expert, as if the Government is to undertake the education of the children of all these islands it will be a very costly undertaking, and every care should be taken at the outset to establish a system on the best lines. Only an expert can do this.

As you know, the educational work has been almost entirely carried on by the London Missionary Society. There are, however, two Catholic schools—one in Rarotonga and one in Aitutaki—conducted by nuns belonging to a French order. The Mother Superior in each case is a Frenchwoman, but the other nuns are Irish or British. English is taught in these schools, which appear well conducted. They are at present the only facilities for the education of white children. There are also Catholic day schools conducted by French priests at Atiu, Mauke, and, I believe, Manihiki. I know very little about these. The Tereora School, at Rarotonga, which was conducted by the London Missionary Society as a boarding-school, and intended for children of other islands as well as Rarotonga, has been closed for some two years. It was, I am informed, a well-conducted school. English was taught, and the children, for a time at all events, were removed from bad influences and placed under good. There was, I am told, great difficulty in getting the Natives to pay even the very moderate amount charged for the keep and teaching of their children. There has been no representative of the London Missionary Society in the Group for several months, owing to the long illness and lamented death of the Rev. J. J. K. Hutchin, for thirty years missionary here. Hence I have been unable to discuss anything connected with the London Mission schools. But I believe there is no intention to reopen Tereora.

At Aitutaki there is the Araura School, formerly conducted by a white teacher engaged by the London Missionary Society, but recently by a Native teacher and wife, Mr. and Mrs. Tiavare Enare, both old students of the school. I stayed at this school when at Aitutaki. The school is conducted as a boarding-school. There were about eighty children—as many as the school can accommodate. The children appeared well cared-for and happy. Both teachers speak excellent English, and teach it to the children. The girls sew very well indeed. Altogether the school appeared to me a very good one, but I cannot judge of the scholastic results. The Island Council take an interest in the school, and the elders take it in turn to stay at it in order to assist the teachers in the care of the children. The Council claims that the school belongs to the island and not to the London Missionary Society; that the island gave the land and built the school without any expense to the society. But the latter undoubtedly established the school, and the land has been vested in it for school purposes. There again, however, the parents are lax in meeting the charges for their children's education, and it is doubtful whether the school can carry on. The teacher's salary is greatly in arrear, and though devoted to his work he cannot live on air. Formerly the London Missionary Society contributed £40 annually towards the teacher's salary, but have not done so to the present man. Cook Islands Administration used to give £50 annually, but two years ago that was discontinued. I have not been able to find a record showing why, but I have been informed that the Rev. Mr. Hall, of the London Missionary Society, objected to its payment. Tiavare Enare told me Mr. Hall ordered him not to take money from Government. I am at a loss to understand why. Mr. Hall left some time ago. I was pressed to renew the subsidy and promised to confer with Mr. Hutchin, but his illness and death prevented that being done. I decidedly think the school should be assisted pending any general scheme of education by Government. I would have done it myself but for my reluctance to do what might appear an interference with the society's arrangements, however well meant such interference might be.

The London Missionary Society has quite a number of day schools taught by Native teachers, except the one here at Avarua, where the missionary himself teaches, assisted by his wife and the

Native mission teachers or students. There are five day schools altogether in Rarotonga in the different settlements, three in Mangaia, three in Aitutaki, and one in each of the other islands, including the Northern Islands. I am unable to express an opinion as to their value, but they are certainly better than nothing. Except to a certain extent at the Avarua School, no attempt is made to teach English—in fact, the teachers themselves have only a very limited knowledge of that language. This largely detracts from the usefulness of the schools. Unless a Native can speak or at least read English his opportunities for self-advancement are necessarily limited, and he competes on very unequal terms with the world as it is now rapidly opening out to him. The number of books printed in Maori is very small, and thus there is little chance of administering the “healthy mental stimulus” referred to by Mr. Moss.

I believe the Natives would readily listen to educative addresses or lectures were there any one to give them. I understand the London Missionary Society desires to be relieved of the burden of education of the children and that Government should undertake it, but I am not aware that the society intends to abandon any other part of its mission work in these islands. I apprehend that if Parliament votes money for education here, as must be done before any system can be inaugurated, it will impose a condition that the schools are to be secular or at least open to all denominations. Probably the London Missionary Society has foreseen this, but I should imagine they will make some attempt to ensure religious instruction being given.

As to their school properties, I have obtained a report from the Registrar of the Land Titles Court, which I append hereto. The society obviously hold the school-sites, other than Tereora leasehold, clothed with a trust, and are not entitled to sell or otherwise dispose of them, especially if it be true that the Natives put up the buildings. But the taking-over could no doubt be arranged without any great friction; if not, there is always the power to take land under section 20 of the Cook Islands Government Act, 1908. I am fairly confident the Natives will ask no compensation, as they all recognize the value of the schools, even though as individuals they may be lax in regard to their responsibilities towards their children.

Given the buildings, the next question would be obtaining competent teachers similar to those in the Native schools in New Zealand. The language would be an initial difficulty. Any one with a knowledge of New Zealand Maori would, however, soon speak the local dialect with fluency. At least two teachers would be needed here to begin with, and one at each of the other near islands, except perhaps Mitiaro, where the total population is only about two hundred. They could get Native assistance. As to the Northern Islands, I have no personal knowledge of them. One man might perhaps be able to act as supervisor for Penrhyn, Rakahanga, and Manihiki, but communication is infrequent and uncertain. I do not think you will ever get a white man to go to Pukapuka, where there are a little over four hundred people in all. At Palmerston the population consists of the Marsters family—something over a hundred. Very stringent regulations would be needed to enforce regular attendance. The present Ordinance is insufficient (the School Attendance Ordinance, 1903—page 143 of the printed Book of Laws).

I regret that I can say no more on this very important subject, but, as I have already intimated, it seems to me that details would have to be worked out by an expert in education matters. I observe in the correspondence printed as addendum to Lieut.-Colonel Gudgeon's report of 1906 that Mr. Hogben appears to have suggested a scheme of education for these Islands, but I have not been able to find any record of the scheme here (*vide* parliamentary paper A.—3 at page 102). You will there also find Lieut.-Colonel Gudgeon's own views. No doubt the education given should be of a primary character, with some technical education, especially in regard to tropical agriculture.

I have now dealt with all the special matters referred to in your letter of instructions; but as you invite any further suggestions for the betterment of the Islands I will mention one or two things which seem of importance.

#### WATER-SUPPLY.

First and above all is the question of water-supply. It is *the* great requirement of the Islands. Not only is it of importance that there should be good drinking-water, but there is the question of cleanliness. It is, of course, the merest platitude to say that cleanliness means health, and dirt means disease. From my experience it seems to me that the people will avail themselves of water for cleanliness of their persons and clothing if it is easily available to them. Give them an opportunity everywhere to keep clean and it will save much in the health department. A great deal has already been done in this direction; much remains to be done. All the work that I would suggest is, I know, in contemplation when it is considered that funds will permit. The need of it is fully recognized. But what I want to urge on you is “do it now.” Do not wait to do it partly this year and partly next. Put it all in hand and complete it as speedily as possible. This administration has over £4,000 in credit. I do not call that a merit; I call it a sin while such urgent work remains undone. I urge you to spend it all on water if necessary, but I am sure nothing like that will be needed. Valuable work was done last year in the Northern Islands, which are entirely dependent on rain-water, by the construction of large concrete tanks. Boring for water is proceeding at Aitutaki with some success. Several concrete tanks have been constructed there; one or two more are needed. At Atiu the settlement is at the top of the island. Water is got in gullies lower down, probably contaminated. One or two concrete tanks would be a boon in dry seasons, and probably save much sickness. Water is very scarce in the Mauke settlements—two tanks at least are needed. Probably the same at Mitiaro, but I have no positive information. Several tanks are needed at Mangaia. I am expecting a report from the Resident Agent. These tanks cost

£60 to £70 each. In Rarotonga the settlements of Matavera, Muri, and Titikaveka are without water-supply. £300 has been set down in this year's estimate for tanks in outlying islands, and £500 for improvement of the Avarua supply. This latter work is now almost completed. I have taken on myself to order the necessary pipes for the supply to Matavera settlement, although not provided for in the estimates, as I felt sure you would approve. It had been long promised, and it is merely a detail whether the amount appears in this year or next year's accounts. But the large settlements of Titikaveka and Muri equally need water. They have been in straits for water during the recent dry weather of several months, the drought, however, having now apparently broken. Supply can be got from running streams in each of these cases. It is proposed to start the construction of tanks at Mangaia as soon as practicable, and, if you authorize the expenditure, to follow at the other islands. The only suitable roofs for catchment areas are those of the Mission churches or schools, and though the society has given its cordial assent to that being done yet it naturally wishes to be consulted in each case as to locality of tank, and there is no one at present to consult. I understand a representative is expected before the end of the year. The Health Officers are entirely in accordance with my views on this question of water-supply, as I feel sure you yourself will be.

#### LAWs.

These are in a chaotic state, and badly need consolidating and in some respects amending. The Registrar of the High Court, Mr. Blaine, has an extremely good grip of the complicated Acts, Ordinances, and Regulations in force, and his experience should be availed of to assist in revision.

#### RESIDENT AGENTS.

These officers are all very dissatisfied with their present pay and future prospects. They urge that they have complicated and responsible duties to perform, and that their conditions of life are expensive and most unattractive, while the pay is small and they have no opportunity of providing for old age such as the New Zealand Civil servant has. Several of them talk of resigning, and suitable men to fill their places will be difficult to find. There is force in their contention, and I commend the question of improving their position to your favourable consideration. What they really want is a little better pay. Residences are needed at Aitutaki and Atiu.

#### HEALTH.

It may be of some service to make a few remarks, even from a layman's point of view, on this all-important question. And, first, I would like to refer to a statement in Dr. Perceval's report of the 10th October, 1911, appearing in the Resident Commissioner's report for last year—I mean the statement that "leprosy is rife on every island except Rarotonga." This is a grave exaggeration, calculated to cause needless alarm here and in New Zealand. I am not relying solely on my own opinion, though to any one who knows the island the next sentence in the report is largely a refutation of the quoted statement, as I shall try to show. Of the thirty-seven cases which Dr. Perceval states he knows of, his list shows that thirty-two are in the Northern Islands, and five in the Cook Group proper—viz., three at Aitutaki, one at Mangaia, and one at Mitiaro (a suspect). I have heard no more of the suspected case at Mitiaro; the one at Mangaia Dr. Maclurkin has thoroughly examined during his stay there of a month, and he declares it not to be leprosy at all. Dr. Maclurkin is now at Aitutaki for a month and will report on the three persons isolated there on suspicion of leprosy, and I think it highly probable he will say they are not lepers. Even if they are, the statement that leprosy is rife is an exaggeration so far as the Cook Group is concerned. There are lepers in New Zealand, yet no one says leprosy is rife there because there are two or three cases on Quail Island. Dr. Dawson said to me, "The statement may be true as regards the Northern Islands; it is certainly not so in the near islands." Dr. Baldwin has just returned from a six weeks' visit to the Northern Islands. His report will reach you shortly, but he informs me he was unable to find nearly so many lepers even there as Dr. Perceval claims to have done. The latter's report shows that he had only the briefest of stays at each island, and was probably rushed with patients, leaving him little time for observation and careful diagnosis. I have thought it my duty to put this aspect of matters before you, knowing how alarming the mere name of leprosy is to the average man, a feeling I fully share. The reality is bad enough, but it is not so bad as has been stated. Dr. Baldwin will in his report set out proposals for dealing with the northern lepers, and it would be premature for me to attempt to discuss this most difficult problem. I am clear, however, that if it be at all possible a white man should be put in charge of any leper-station—no Native can be trusted in such a position—and if the station is to be at Penrhyn close supervision from here, seven hundred miles away, with only infrequent communication by sailing-vessels, is impracticable.

Syphilis and venereal diseases are the scourge of these Islands, as I believe they are of the whole of the tropical islands of the Pacific. Primarily, of course, filth disease, it is here largely hereditary. But the prevalent habit of promiscuous sexual intercourse among the Natives, the "early sexual excesses," spoken of by Mr. Moss—though, unfortunately, they are not only "early"—must greatly spread the disease and tend to nullify all efforts to ameliorate it. I do not know what can be done to minimize the habit, the outcome of perhaps the strongest of all human passions, but certainly the Islands will never be healthy while it obtains to the present extent. The earnest efforts of the missionaries have through many years been directed against it without, I fear, very substantial results. The ethical and religious side of the question may be safely left to them; but it is the physical effects that I am dwelling

on. Possibly education as to the evil physical results may in time do some good, but I greatly doubt it. Some form of the Contagious Diseases Act applicable to men and women alike might be tried. At the least, any one convicted of an offence against the laws relating to adultery and illicit sexual intercourse should be compelled to submit to a medical examination for venereal disease. I must confess these suggestions seem futile even to myself, but even out of condemnation of them some proposal of value may come.

I observe proposals for obtaining a Government vessel to be used for health purposes. This is desirable enough if the expense can be provided for. The unassisted resources of the Islands cannot do it. And I fear the expense will be greater than has been estimated. I do not know what a suitable vessel would cost, but probably £4,000, and I am told the upkeep would be £100 a month at the least. There would be small opportunity of earning remunerative freights. There are three schooners now trading in these Islands, and a fourth is said to be coming shortly. There would probably be a prejudice against "the hospital ship." The proposal therefore needs very careful consideration. I would prefer, at any rate, to see it postponed till it can be seen how the Health Department as now constituted can manage under existing conditions, and to my mind it certainly ought to be postponed to the question of water-supply.

#### LIVE-STOCK DEPARTMENT.

It seems to me doubtful whether the benefits gained are commensurate with the expense of this department, and in view of the many urgent calls upon the public purse it should be considered whether this department should not be abolished.

#### GENERAL.

There are other matters to which I might refer, but I think all of them have previously been fully reported upon at different times and it is needless to do so again.

My observation and experience during my residence of over seven months in these Islands can only lead me to say that, while there must necessarily be room for difference of opinion on details of administration, the general result shows that valuable work has been done, and is being done, for the health and prosperity of the community, and that there is no serious cause for complaint.

I have received every assistance from the various officers of the Administration, whom I have found both zealous and efficient in their several capacities. As a whole I consider the Administration fortunate in its staff.

I have, &c.,

CHAS. MACCORMICK, Judge,  
Acting Resident-Commissioner.

The Hon. the Minister in Charge, Cook and other Islands Administration, Wellington.

#### MEMORANDUM FOR ACTING RESIDENT COMMISSIONER.

##### Re *London Missionary Society Schools.*

Rarotonga, 31st October, 1912.

GENERALLY speaking, the lands occupied in the various islands of the Group by the London Missionary Society for school purposes were the subject of grants many years ago by the Native owners of the lands. These grants have been confirmed by the Land Titles Court, and freehold certificates of title to the same issued in favour of the London Missionary Society corporation, subject to the condition that the land should be used for school or church purposes, as the case may be. There are, however, differences in some cases, which I will particularize.

1. *The Araura School at Aitutaki (Allotment 80, Arutanga).*—The title to this is in the name of the London Missionary Society corporation, and the encumbrances noted thereon are as follows: "The conditions contained in the grant of the land to the London Missionary Society dated the 16th day of November, 1898, document lodged in the Court No. 105: the condition that the said land shall be used by the London Missionary Society as a site for a school." The condition contained in the grant is as follows: "We, the owners of the land, sign our names to this paper as proof that we have given this section of land to the London Missionary Society, that it may remain in the possession of that society until the day it ends its work on this island. When that time comes the land will revert to the owners."

2. *The Schoolhouse at Arotanga, Aitutaki (Allotment 4E).*—The title to this is in the name of the London Missionary Society corporation, and the encumbrances noted thereon are as follows: "The conditions contained in the grant of the land to the London Missionary Society dated the — day of January, 1877, document lodged in the Court No. 103: the conditions that the said land shall be used by the London Missionary Society for school purposes, and that on default being made in such use the land shall revert to the Crown."

3. *The Tereora School, Rarotonga (Allotment 106B, Nikao).*—This is a leasehold, now vested in the London Missionary Society corporation. The term of the lease is thirty years from the 1st January, 1894, and is renewable. Annual rent, 100 dollars, or £10.

4. *Schoolhouse, Settlement of Avarua*.—The following entry appears in the minute-book of the Land Titles Court, Rarotonga, No. 4, page 67: "Whereas the Resident Missionary of the L.M.S. is anxious that his position in the schoolhouse should be defined, it is now agreed that this house is the property of Makea Ariki, the Arikis, Mataiapos, Rangatiras, and people of Avarua. The London Mission to have the right to teach all things religious and secular in the school, and any question as to the right of others to teach in the house in question to be left to Makea Ariki.—Read out and assented to by Makea and all the people in the Court.—W. E. GUDGEON."

I think I am right in saying that, with the exception of the Tereora School, all the school buildings throughout the Islands have been built by and at the expense of the Natives. At Tereora the mission was aided to the extent of about £200 by outside subscriptions.

E. BLAINE,  
Registrar, Land Titles Court.

SIR,— Cook Islands Administration, Rarotonga, 22nd November, 1912.  
Supplementary to my report of the 7th instant:—

#### SALES OF LIQUORS.

I omitted to state that I considered the forms of authority which were in use were too general in terms, and with the concurrence of the Chief Medical Officer and the Collector of Customs I have substituted a form in more specific terms. I think this leaves no room for any inadvertence or carelessness or misconception as to what I consider the Act to mean. I must confess that I am not altogether clear as to what the proviso to paragraph (2) of section 277 really means, but after consideration I take it to be governed by paragraph (1). I attach copies of superseded forms and the one I substituted.

[Form now in use.]

The officer appointed to sell liquor in terms of section 277, the Licensing Act, 1908.  
I CERTIFY that \_\_\_\_\_ has been under medical treatment by me for \_\_\_\_\_, and I prescribe  
for his [her] use.  
Dated this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 191 \_\_\_\_\_.

[Superseded.]

To the Collector of Customs.  
I RECOMMEND you to issue a permit to \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ bottles of \_\_\_\_\_ for medicinal purposes.  
Rarotonga, \_\_\_\_\_, 191 \_\_\_\_\_.

Permission granted.

COLLECTOR OF CUSTOMS.

[Superseded.]

Cook Islands Administration.

LIQUOR PERMIT.

I HEREBY grant permission to \_\_\_\_\_ to purchase \_\_\_\_\_ bottle of \_\_\_\_\_ for medicinal purposes.  
Rarotonga, \_\_\_\_\_, 191 \_\_\_\_\_.

LAND.

MEDICAL OFFICER.

It has occurred to me that you may have expected me to say something on the subject whether land was available for European settlement. This has been fully reported on previously, but it can do no harm to give my own views.

I stated in my report of the 7th instant that there was no room for any considerable influx of Europeans. I believe that to be indisputable. I will give my reasons briefly:—

*Rarotonga*, the island which presents by far the greatest attractions to the would-be settler by reason of its superior fertility and accessibility, contains 16,500 acres. Of this some 4,000 acres are mountains, steep and rocky, and of little use for cultivation. Nearly 2,000 acres have already been acquired by Europeans, leaving therefore between 10,000 and 11,000 acres to support a population of about 2,500 Natives. Obviously there is little room for Europeans. It is true that a great deal of the land is capable of higher cultivation and thus of greater productiveness, but most of it is producing something, and the Natives are planting to some extent, though perhaps not always to the best advantage. Small areas may from time to time

be picked up by a man on the spot, but that, I think, will be the extent of future European occupation for many years. I have heard complaints that the Land Titles Court has allowed the land to be divided into small areas and put too many names in the titles, thereby making it difficult for Europeans to lease. This amounts to a suggestion that the rights of the Natives, solemnly assured to them at the time of annexation, should have been subordinated to the convenience of a handful of Europeans. Those who have had experience in Native land in New Zealand know what iniquities were perpetrated and what wrongs were suffered through the system which obtained there in early days of putting in only a few names in the titles of blocks of land. Ostensibly trustees, such nominees almost invariably betrayed their trust. Much of the work of the Native Land Court since 1886 has been directed towards partially remedying these early errors. The Land Titles Court here has been wise in seeing that the people's rights are put on record. Nevertheless, difficulty and expense in leasing should be avoided as far as possible, hence the suggestion I have previously made that similar provisions to the "assembled owners" clauses of the Native Land Act, 1909, should be brought into force.

*Aitutaki*, a small island about 3,600 acres, and some small islets along the reef, in all perhaps another 300 acres, is almost all fertile land. Population, about 1,200, hence there is little opening for European settlement. Some of the local traders are acquiring small areas by way of lease. A large part is still unclothed with title, but most of it is utilized, though not to best advantage.

*Mitiaro* contains about 2,500 acres, while the population is only a little over 200. It is not, however, all of good quality, and at present is not visited by the steamer. Very little Land Court work has been done. Some land might be obtainable, but in all these small islands the best parts are occupied by the Natives.

*Mauke* is about the size of Aitutaki, but the population is only about 450. It is fertile, and some land could no doubt be obtained in small areas. Most of it has been dealt with by the Court and titles issued.

*Atiu*.—A large island. It has not been surveyed as a whole, but is supposed to contain about 20,000 acres. Population, under 1,000. It is of mixed quality, but good land predominates. Very little Land Court work has been done. This island, I think, offers the best opportunity of obtaining land for settlement, but communication, as in the case of Mauke and Mitiaro, is irregular and infrequent—a great drawback. Steamer calls three or four times a year, and schooners at intervals.

*Mangaia* is about the same size as Atiu, but large deductions must be made for rocky and barren areas. Population, between 1,500 and 1,600. There is a monthly steamer. Natives apparently object to their lands being dealt with by the Court, and little has been done in this direction or in survey. I consider the prospects of obtaining suitable land for European settlement to be poor.

*The Hervey Islands (Manuae and Te-au-o-tu)* are leased as a whole for a long term. They contain about 1,500 acres—coconut land.

*Takutea*, 300 acres, is Crown land. About twelve miles from Atiu. Is unoccupied. Has been planted with coconuts by this Administration.

*Palmerston* is leased to the Marsters family (over 100) for ten years.

*The Far Northern Islands* are, I am advised, out of the question for European settlement.

#### REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS, DEATHS, AND MARRIAGES.

This is at present done by the European and Native ministers of the different Churches, who are under no penalty and under no obligation to make any return. (*Vide* section 15 of the Marriage and Divorce Act, 1899, page 91 of Book of Laws). The police, however, have orders to immediately report all deaths, so that inquiry may be made into the circumstances. I consider that registration should be done by Administration officers, though there is no objection to the present system being continued in addition if thought desirable. I refer you to the Registration of Births, Deaths, and Marriages Act, 1892, page 50 of Book of Laws. This provides for registration of births and marriages, but not of deaths, except by implication. At any rate, there is no penalty for not registering a death. But the Registrar of the High Court informs me that this Act has been a dead-letter since the passing of the Act of 1899, which I have referred to. He himself is the only registration officer. All this has been previously reported on, but presumably it was thought unnecessary to change the system.

Another question is whether there should not be a civil officer appointed in each island to celebrate marriages. Some people object to any religious ceremony, others to be married by ministers not of their own faith, and in some instances ministers themselves object to perform marriages on conscientious grounds—*i.e.*, of divorced persons.

#### HOSPITAL.

Though, generally speaking, the Health Officers are satisfied, they press for a laboratory and storeroom for drugs. I have already forwarded Chief Health Officer's report on this to the Secretary. I have arranged for a further supply of hot water to Hospital building proper, and for certain alterations in horse-paddock. I attach copy of a letter from the Chief Health Officer on certain other matters which I have discussed with him. The water-closets referred to are in the houses of the doctor and nurse—the Hospital closets are detached earth-closets. I purpose altering the water-closets in nurse's quarters at once, and I have asked the Engineer to report as to the other one, and whether an improvement of light in the operating-room can be effected.

I have, &c.,

CHAS. E. MACCORMICK, Judge,  
Acting Resident Commissioner.

The Hon. the Minister in Charge, Cook and other Islands Administration, Wellington.

SIR,—

Rarotonga, 26th November, 1912.

Referring to our conversation yesterday on certain matters concerning the Hospital: There is no drainage at any point on the beach; all drains end in sumps dug in the sand and walled with coral. There is not sufficient fall to allow of an efficient septic-tank system, and a direct outlet into deep water is not possible except at very large expense. As inside water-closets are objectionable and a source of danger, it would be a good thing to put them outside the buildings, in an annexe with cross-ventilation where possible, especially the one in the nurse's house, that being on an inside wall and close to the kitchen.

There would be an advantage in buying stores in large quantities from New Zealand, but that cannot be done unless adequate store room is provided. I do not think that there would be found any saving in buying coal in large quantities, as it is very liable to perish in this climate.

As regards the Hospital itself, the operating-room is not adequately lighted, but that must be put up with; more storage is required for drugs; and an office would be a convenience. This can be arranged when the laboratory is built, as our present storeroom can be used for the purpose.

I have, &amp;c.,

The Resident Commissioner.

G. PEARCE BALDWIN, C.M. and H.O.