

which may break out from time to time in any particular country within the Convention.

It seems to be a fact that prior to the arrival of the "Talune" at Apia the Medical Department and the public generally there had no particular knowledge of the ravages of this scourge, which broke out in Europe last year, and it was only when the mail brought by the "Talune" was distributed on the 7th November (that is the 8th in New Zealand) that recipients of letters and papers were made aware of the state of affairs in New Zealand and the outside world.

The fact that any and every Native population is liable to be seriously affected by what to Europeans seem mild diseases should, now that New Zealand is extending her sphere of influence over such populations, arouse in the members of its Health Department a lively sense of the grave responsibility which rests upon them. It is no doubt common knowledge that some years ago when measles broke out in these Pacific islands the death-rate was enormous.

In our opinion it is incumbent and essential that any Government having jurisdiction over tropical countries and Native populations should be alive to the necessity of seeing that the medical staff of such tropical countries is thoroughly organized and efficient.

It seems to us that Captain Atkinson failed in his duty as Port Health Officer in granting, or allowing the Harbourmaster to grant, pratique to the "Talune" under the circumstances. Assuming his evidence to be true in every particular, he admits that the chief steward informed him, perhaps inadvertently, that the passengers were not allowed to land at Suva but were "all right" at Levuka; and assuming that he did remember, as he says he did, coming to the conclusion that there must be something wrong in connection with the public health of Suva and not with the ship, it seems peculiar that he made no inquiries as to what was the disease which made it necessary for the Health Officer there to quarantine the passengers. Having got so much information, his natural course would have been to question the captain of the ship closely on the point. At least one would conclude that, thinking as he did, he would closely examine the passengers who got on board at Suva, but he did not do so. According to his evidence, Captain Atkinson did examine several members of the ship's company who complained of illness, and found their temperatures normal.

Apart from the admission of the chief steward, there appears to have been a complete silence, or, at least, a want of frankness, on the part of the officers, crew, and passengers on board the "Talune" in regard to the subject of influenza specially, and the question of health generally. While it was natural that the officers did not welcome the idea of quarantine, with its vexatious delays and consequent disorganization of the service, and while the passengers of course desired to get off the ship at the earliest possible moment, still we are of opinion that Captain Mawson also failed in his duty in not informing the Health Officer that he had been quarantined both at Suva and Levuka, and giving the reason for such quarantine.

To prevent, as far as possible, a recurrence of such a state of affairs, we suggest that a declaration should be signed by the captain of every ship calling at Samoan ports, and handed to the Health Officer when he boards the vessel, and that it should be made a penal offence if any captain is found guilty of wilfully falsifying such declaration. This declaration should deal with the health of passengers and crew on the voyage; which ports were touched at; whether clean bills of health had been received at all ports—if not, what was the nature of the disease at that particular port; whether the ship or passengers had been quarantined, and, if so, why?

We also consider that great benefit would result in the appointment under the Department of Public Health of a Quarantine Officer for New Zealand and its dependencies, who should have control of all matters connected with quarantine, including controlling and advising Port Health Officers, the clearance of inward and outward shipping, the issue of bills of health, &c. We find that at present bills of health are procured by shipping companies without any reference to the Department of Public Health. Such a course is open to serious abuse. We strongly recommend that in future all bills of health should be issued only by the Health Department, and that the incidental expenses thereof be paid by or through this Department.