

The coconut-trees have a healthy appearance, except that on some islets the leaves are badly eaten by green locusts, which, however, do not appear to affect the crop. The bananas are beautifully clean and free from rust, indicating an absence of the banana-moth from these islands. From an agricultural point of view the only pest is rats, which climb the coconut-trees and eat many young nuts.

28. PERMITS TO TRAVEL.

No Native is permitted to leave the Tokelau Islands unless authorized by special permit from the Native Department; such permit to show the name of the person who agrees to be responsible for the Native while absent from the islands, and for his return thereto.

29. WORK OF THE MISSIONS.

These islands were first discovered by Commodore Byron, R.N., in 1765, and were not visited by missionaries until nearly a century later (1859), when the population was little more than half its present number. At that time the islands were governed by an old chief who combined the offices of king and high priest. The holders of this exalted position were apparently not limited to the members of any one family, but were appointed by selection on the part of the inhabitants themselves. This may account for the fact that there are no hereditary or titled high chiefs in the Tokelau Islands to-day.

Prior to the arrival of the missionaries the people worshipped many gods, some of which they supposed to be embodied in rough blocks of stone. One of these stones is now preserved as a relic of heathen days, on the Island of Fakaofu, and there are still living a few old men who remember and speak of the courage of the early missionaries who destroyed a number of these stone gods in the presence of the assembled Natives in order to prove to them the futility of their worship of stone idols, and the powerlessness of their gods to grant their requests.

Since the introduction of Christianity Natives have been educated entirely by the missions, until practically every person can now read and write, and thereby take a more intelligent interest in life. Internecine wars have ceased, the population has almost doubled, the people are healthy, and are apparently happy and contented. For these benefits the Natives are indebted almost entirely to the missions.

Both missions working in these islands—the London Missionary Society and Roman Catholic—have their headquarters in Samoa, where Native pastors for the Tokelau Islands are trained, and where also a few boys and girls are educated in the Samoan mission schools. The mission schools in the Tokelau Islands are controlled entirely by Native teachers who receive their training in Samoa, and no European missionaries reside in these islands.

The London Mission Society's mission-ship "John Williams" makes an annual trip to Atafu and Fakaofu, and the Roman Catholic Mission also sends a European priest to visit Nukunono once a year.

30. POLICY.

The policy of the New Zealand Government is to promote to the utmost the well-being of the people of these islands. In administering this policy in the light of the needs of the people and the conditions peculiar to the small and separated atolls in which they reside, one is forced to the conclusion that it is impossible to do more than is now being done or proposed to be done in this report.

The well-being and development of Native races depend chiefly upon sound administration in the following three essentials—(1) Health, (2) education, (3) full use of lands.

In regard to—(1.) Health: The maintenance of trained Native personnel and necessary drugs on each island, together with an annual visit by a European doctor from Samoa, is apparently all that is necessary at present.

(2.) Education: The existing system is suitable for the present and future needs of the people if provision is made for the training of a few boys on each island in building, carpentry, and plumbing, also wireless operating, so that the Natives may be made less dependent on outside assistance for building their churches and improving their water-supplies.

(3.) Full use of lands: Economic pressure caused by the increasing population during recent years has compelled the Natives to utilize their lands to the fullest extent possible, so that practically all the available land is already cultivated with the only form of cultivation possible—viz., coconuts.

This situation has created a new problem involving the removal of some of the inhabitants and provision of land elsewhere. But this is a problem which can easily be solved, owing to the large areas of uncultivated land in Samoa, and the willingness of the Samoan people to do all they can to help their friends and fellow Polynesians, the Tokelau-Islanders.

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