

calculated to inflict a great injury on the inhabitants of that and other islands of the group, and to be in direct contravention of the wishes of the greater part of the inhabitants, and in conflict with a fundamental principle of their Constitution. The excuse for the New Zealand Alliance interfering in this matter is to be found in the application of Queen Makea, of Rarotonga, to that body requesting its aid to enforce the prohibitory law as it then stood, which will be found in the correspondence with Her Majesty, Sir John Thurston (the High Commissioner for the Pacific), and others, appended.

I have also the honour to request your Excellency to forward to the Right Honourable the Minister for Foreign Affairs, with whom, I presume, Mr. Moss has his official relations, the copy of the statement forwarded herewith to his address.

I have, &c.,

WILLIAM FOX,
President of the New Zealand Alliance for the Suppression
of the Liquor Traffic.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO.

AMONG the aborigines of the Pacific, none are more interesting than the inhabitants of the group called Cook Islands, of which Rarotonga is the largest and most populous. The people are of the same aboriginal race as the New Zealand Maoris, and speak nearly the same language. They are the finest specimens of physical development of all the natives in the Pacific, and exhibit much natural intelligence and other valuable characteristics. They were among the first of the Pacific-islanders to receive the Gospel at the hands of the Rev. John Williams and the little band of missionaries who, in connection with the London Missionary Society, inaugurated mission-work in Rarotonga about A.D. 1823. Under the auspices of these missionaries they adopted a Constitution based on hereditary monarchy and an elected Parliament of one chamber, which they have maintained to the present day, and under which the will of the people is practically carried out. A fundamental principle embodied in their Constitution prohibits the importation and use of intoxicating liquors, an element everywhere destructive of savage races and everywhere obstructive to the progress of civilisation. If this law had been rigorously enforced the people would of necessity have remained as God created them and the missionaries found them—a perfectly sober nation. Of late years, however, the growing commerce of the Pacific has brought them into contact with outside influences. The ubiquitous liquor traffic has found them out, has fixed its hook in their jaw, undermined the fidelity of many of them to the great principle of their Constitution, and threatens to destroy the sobriety of a community which, when we first made its acquaintance and for many years afterwards, was ignorant even of the taste of the fire-water. Vessels from New Zealand, Australia, Tahiti, and elsewhere now carry on a considerable commerce with the islands; and, in defiance or evasion of the law, alcoholic liquors are introduced to a large extent, which has already gone far to destroy the general sobriety, and threatens as a natural and apparently inevitable consequence to annihilate the race. The natives being unacquainted with the indefatigable persistency of the liquor traffic, and apparently not very familiar with the vigorous execution of the law, have failed to grapple with the evil. A few months ago a pathetic appeal was made by Queen Makea of Rarotonga to the Governor of New Zealand and the leading temperance organizations in that colony, asking them to prevent the transmission of intoxicating drink from our country to theirs.

Appended will be found copies of letters upon the subject which have passed between the Queen of Rarotonga, Sir John Thurston (the High Commissioner for the Pacific), and the executive council of the New Zealand Alliance for the Suppression of the Liquor Traffic, and other papers to which your Excellency's attention is respectfully solicited.

Subsequently to the date of the correspondence above referred to, and as the result of a negotiation between the Colonial Government of New Zealand and the Imperial Government of Great Britain, the latter has, on the nomination of the former, appointed a New Zealand colonist, Mr. F. J. Moss, to be "Resident" in Rarotonga. What are the objects, functions, and limits of power of the appointment are not very clearly understood; but it is understood that, although salaried by the Colonial Government, Mr. Moss holds himself entirely independent of it in the performance of his duties, and only responsible to the Imperial Government.

Mr. Moss has recently paid his first visit to Rarotonga, the duration of which was only a few days. Brief as the period was, however, he appears to have suggested to the Parliament of Rarotonga very important political and legislative changes of a fundamental character, when he appears for the time to have occupied by some means the "presidential chair" of the Legislature. Among these changes is a fundamental alteration of the prohibitory law before mentioned—the legalisation of the importation of intoxicating liquors under the superintendence of a European officer, who, on their arrival in the colony, is to take charge of them and distribute them to such applicants as he thinks proper on payment of duty or license-fee of so much a gallon, and apparently on behalf of the importer, of the price of the liquor. This appears in some manner or another to have passed through the Legislature under Mr. Moss's peculiar presidency before referred to.

It seems, however, very clear that the whole transaction was a surprise upon the natives, and both the Queen and some of her chief advisers are reported to have entered very vigorous protests against it; and it is not likely that it will be allowed to continue as it is. A copy of the only document which has reached us, "A correspondent's letter" in the *New Zealand Herald*, the authorship known to the editor, and believed by him to be reliable, is forwarded herewith (Appendix 7), from which a bird's-eye view of the whole case can be obtained. An interview with Mr. Moss on his return to Auckland was requested by the executive of the New Zealand Alliance for the Suppression of the Liquor Traffic, but declined by Mr. Moss on the ground that it would be a breach of official