

APPENDIX No. 7.

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The first meeting of the newly-elected Council took place on the 22nd December, at the residence of Queen Mere Pa. There were present: Mr. Moss (in the chair), Queens Makea, Mere Pa, and Tine Moma, chiefs Tepou, Karaka, Tekeao, Rainuka, Maovete, and Mr. J. M. Gelling. Mr. Moss, in opening the proceedings, had a letter read (being interpreted by Mr. Hutchins), informing them that Mr. Gelling had been duly elected to the Council by the foreign residents. Mr. Gelling then took his seat. Mr. Moss stated that Ngaramu (King of Atiu) wished to be a member of the Council, and the request was acceded to; he also said that the Council would not interfere with the local governments of the island. The chief Maovete was then elected the chairman for that meeting. Mr. Moss said he wished the *arikis* not to sit in this Council, but appoint *ngatiapos* to take seats, and that the *arikis*, with the Resident, form an Upper House; and that any law should not be put in force until approved by the Upper Parliament. The natives expressed their astonishment at the strange customs of the *paapas*. If the law was passed by the Council they could not understand why some other people were to be able to say no to it. What was the use of the Council if others were to undo their work? They ultimately agreed to the suggestion. The following law was proposed for the regulation of the disposal of intoxicating liquors: 1. That the Licensing Officer shall be now appointed by the Council. In case of vacancy he shall be temporarily appointed by the *arikis*. 2. The duty of the Licensing Officer shall be to take account of all spirits, wine, cordials, beer, and other intoxicating liquors in store within the Cook Islands, or what may be hereafter imported. 3. He shall see that the same are placed by the owner in a separate building with two locks, of one of which the key shall remain in his possession. 4. No intoxicating liquor shall be sold, taken, or be consumed by the owners thereof except through the agency of the Licensing Officer, who shall issue a permit and keep a record of the same. 5. The president of the Council may from time to time make any regulation for carrying out this law. 6. On all liquors for which the Licensing Officer issues a permit he shall charge as follows: Spirits at the rate of 6s. per gallon; wines at the rate of 1s. per gallon; beer at the rate of 6d. per gallon; and when in bottle, six customary quart bottles, or twelve customary pints, shall be counted as one gallon. 7. Any person disobeying this law shall be liable to a fine not exceeding 150 dollars, or a proportionate period of imprisonment with hard labour, and the Licensing Officer shall prosecute the same. 8. All fees or fines under this law shall be public revenue, and from the same the Licensing Officer shall be paid such sum per annum as the Council may direct. All previous laws relating to the importation or sale of liquors to be repealed. In considering these proposed laws, the natives urged the total abolition of the importation of the liquor, and, in explanation, said difficulty was found in making the Europeans obey the laws; and they also objected to their being two laws—one that Europeans could have liquor and the Maoris not. Tepou o te Rangi spoke most warmly on the subject, and stated several cases in which European offenders had defied the laws; and he could not see why the total abolition of the liquor was objected to. If the European was to be allowed his drink he considered that the natives should have equal rights. Mr. Moss said it would be utterly impossible to stop the importation of liquor, and he could not see the reason why the European should be deprived of having liquor and selling it to the other Europeans if he so desired, under certain restrictions, as provided by the proposed Act. Tepou still objected to two laws, and advocated either total abolition or that both the European and the native be placed on the same footing. After considerable discussion, it was ultimately resolved to adjourn the consideration until the 24th, during which time the European representative on the Council would confer with his constituents and ascertain their opinions. The meeting then adjourned.

On the 24th the adjourned meeting took place at Queen Makea's residence. The liquor question was the first business taken up, and Mere Pa said, if the liquor was to be brought into the place, very well, let every one get it freely, and soon men and women would be drinking, and then its evil effects would be fully seen. Mr. Chalmers read over a newly-compiled law from Mr. Moss, of which the following is a *résumé*: A Licensing Officer to be appointed by the Council, and in the event of vacancy the Council to fill it; his duty to be to take charge of all liquor on, or that may come on, to the island, and only to issue the same according to the law, he to select a suitable place to store the liquor in. On or before the 10th January next all persons having liquor were to report same to the Licensing Officer and place it at his disposal. Any one selling liquor shall see that the person to whom he sells obtains a permit from the Licensing Officer. In the case of natives he shall only issue a permit on the written authority of the Queen of each district. The fees to be paid for obtaining the liquor from bond to be: Spirits, \$1½ per gallon; wine, 30c. per gallon; and beer, 15c. per gallon; the penalty for infringement of the law \$150, or proportionate amount of hard labour. All other laws *re* liquor except as relates to natives are repealed. Prohibitory orders to be obtainable against excessive drinkers. The Licensing Officer has power to enter any person's premises in search of liquor, and any liquor found not reported shall seize it, the onus of proof resting with the owner. Returns to be compiled monthly and sent to the Governor of New Zealand. Mr. Garnier was appointed Licensing Officer at a salary of \$25 a month. Considerable discussion took place, but it was of a very desultory nature, the natives evidently not grasping the full meaning of the law. Laws dealing with cattle-trespassing, vessels arriving with sickness on board, and Sunday observance were considered. In connection with the last subject, considerable discussion took place, it being pointed out that the steamer "Little Agnes" almost always sailed on Sundays. Laws were also considered against furious riding and driving, dog-tax, against further introduction of Chinese, and divorce. At this stage Queen Makea said she considered matters were being pushed along far too rapidly, and that she did not understand all that was taking place. New laws were being passed, but nothing was being done with the old laws. She would like the meeting to finish, to give time to consider matters. After the other Queens and some of the native members of the Council had also spoken in a similar strain, the meeting closed.