

people. It is very rigidly practised in Mangaia. In Rarotonga, and in some of the other islands, the custom has been allowed to fall into desuetude.

The tribes of Oneroa and Tamarua are chiefly of one mind in this quarrel, but a minority among them side with the strong people of Iverua who have espoused Pearse's cause. The quarrel is said to be not without risk of bloodshed if allowed to continue unsettled, for the people are from of old combative and very determined.

The first question raised is, how far the "authorities of the land," as they are styled by the Rev. Mr. Harris, have power to prevent trade being carried on in any other way than in the Market-house, and at any other time than on the arrival of a vessel at their island. The people of Mangaia and of the most northern island, Aitutaki, are very anxious to have an answer on this point as soon as possible. Arising from it is the further question: Supposing the power allowed, can it be exercised in districts, such as Iverua, unwilling to adopt the rule? If allowed at Mangaia or Aitutaki can the power be used at Rarotonga, where there are many traders, with a large amount of valuable foreign property. The native Council in each island is supposed to legislate for the whole generally, but each tribe is jealous of its independence, and resentful of interference. In any case, if allowed to enforce this law without payment for damage sustained by those who have already settled under a different system, grave injury may be inflicted.

There is the further question: how far such a rule could be enforced on other than British subjects? Mr. Ward, an agent of the Société Commerciale (a German company operating from Tahiti), attempted, about six months ago, to open a store at Mangaia, as mentioned in my despatch, No. 1/90. The natives refused to let him do so, and, he asserts, took forcible possession of his goods, to which, however, they allow him free access. He can only sell when a vessel arrives, and must then take his goods to the Market-house. I do not know if the Société Commerciale has made any complaint. If so, it would probably be to the High Commissioner, Sir John Thurston, G.C.M.G., in Fiji, or to the German Government in Berlin. I mention the case again here, as bearing upon the general question, for your Excellency's consideration.

With reference to the "settlement land" referred to at various times in these reports, I may observe that in all the islands land was set aside, on the introduction of Christianity, in order that the natives might be able to build rent free, and live near the church and school. At Rarotonga, when foreign residents arrived and wished to get building-sites for trade purposes, it gradually became the practice to lease a site to them for a period of years at a ground-rent, generally of \$50 per section per annum. The rentals go, in these cases, to the chief or chiefs by whom the land was originally placed in trust under the London Missionary Society. The natives live together in villages of their own near to, but apart from, the foreign residents.

I beg leave also to point out that the lease of the land on which Mr. Pearse built, whether it be good or not good as a lease, is interpreted by the natives as giving, at the utmost, a yearly tenure, while Mr. Pearse holds that the tenure was to last as long as he continued to pay the stipulated rental. The value of the house and store put up by him is certainly not less than £320 in its present unfinished state.

The native dissentients further dispute the right of the chief, Ata, to grant a lease of the land to Pearse at all. They say that his ancestors were conquered and driven away seventy or eighty years ago, and only allowed, as an act of grace, to reoccupy the land at a much later date. They maintain that this only gives him the right of occupation, certainly not of alienation.

I have, &c.,

FREDERICK J. MOSS.

To His Excellency the Earl of Onslow, G.C.M.G., Governor of New Zealand.

Report on the Expulsion from Mangaia, on the 25th August, 1890, of Mr. Harry Worth Pearse.

ON the 25th November the schooner "Torea" resumed the voyage from Rarotonga, and started for Mangaia, but adverse winds compelled us first to visit Aitutaki and Atiu. We therefore did not arrive at Mangaia till the 5th December.

The Acting-Consul at Rarotonga, Mr. Exham, went with me, and had engaged an interpreter, who failed us at the last minute. No other was to be obtained; but, fortunately, the Rev. J. Chalmers had not left by the "Richmond," as he intended, and, on being informed of the difficulty, kindly accompanied me in the "Torea." The aid given by Mr. Chalmers throughout my stay in the group, not only as an interpreter but as an adviser whose long experience of the people rendered the advice peculiarly valuable, claims from me the most ample recognition.

On landing, I arranged through the resident missionary, the Rev. G. A. Harris, for a meeting of the chiefs, confining it to the chiefs in order to lessen the chance of disturbance similar to that which broke up the meeting of the 9th September, held by the Consul, and referred to in my despatch of the 21st November. At Mr. Harris's request, it was decided that he should not attend unless specially required. Mr. Pearse, who had come for the purpose in the "Torea," was present with the other foreign residents.

The native chiefs were well represented. They included the ruling Ariki, the deposed Ariki (King John), the Ariki of Tamarua, the Governors of Oneroa, and the chief Ata, who had leased the land to Pearse. There were also present the Chief of Police, and a number of others, between seventy and eighty persons in all. The natives were sullen and determined, and in a very different mood from that in which I had first met them. Only two of the settlements, Oneroa and Tamarua,