

which was similar to Pearse's, except that the Aitutaki people had allowed Mr. Mason to remain unmolested after his store was closed, and been too wise to do as they had done, and forcibly expel him.

Meringi Tangi replied: "My fear is this: If we agree, and a fine is afterwards imposed on us besides, and we are then forced to keep traders here altogether, it will be our death. We have been so often told that this thing shall be settled, but are still left in doubt. Mr. Exham said some one would come to settle it in a few months. Now you come and tell us the same. Will it not be so again? When the store was open it impoverished us, because the people were continually selling their produce in small quantities to buy things they could have done without, and children even gave way to the temptation, and stole the produce of their parents to buy with it at the store. The store is a constant temptation to the people to run into debt, and the goods are dearer than when bought at the Market-house, where they have to be paid for at once. We also get there a better price for our produce, as well as a small income from market-fees, which we should lose. I am not speaking my own thoughts only; they are the thoughts of the Governor and people. In the two villages of Tamarua and Oneroa we are as one man on this subject. Another thing about which we are all agreed in these two settlements is this: Pearse must not remain in Mangaia. He makes trouble and divisions among us."

I pointed out that if they had fault to find with Pearse they should have complained to the Consul. To expel him or any other foreign resident, as they had done, was, I must impress upon them, a very grave offence. Daniela rejoined that they had removed people before, and that there was no trouble about it then. I replied that this must have been because the people removed did not complain, and perhaps had been so grossly wrong that they were afraid to complain.

Here the interview ended. In saying "Good-bye" I again warned them on no account to expel any of the foreign residents still among them, but to complain to the Consul, if they had reason to do so before I returned from New Zealand. This I did, as I learned that some of them talked loudly of sending away the traders still on the island. They promised to consider the whole question among themselves, and to communicate with me at Rarotonga, if possible, before I sailed for New Zealand. I left Mangaia in the afternoon of the 6th December, and up to the 29th December, the date of my leaving Rarotonga, no vessel had arrived from Mangaia.

FREDERICK J. MOSS.

No. 11.

Mr. F. J. Moss to His Excellency the GOVERNOR, Wellington.

MY LORD,—

Auckland, 17th January, 1891.

When at Aitutaki, on my way to Mangaia, I found the natives engaged in a dispute with a Mr. Mason, similar in many respects to that in which the Mangaiaians were in conflict with Mr. Pearse.

Being asked by both sides to make inquiry, I did so during the stay of the "Torea" at that island. The Aitutakians had not, however, molested Mr. Mason personally.

I annex a report of the proceedings.

I have, &c.,

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

FREDERICK J. MOSS.

Report on Mr. Mason's Case at Aitutaki.

MR. MASON complains that he came to Aitutaki under express permission to open a store; that on his arrival an embargo was placed upon the store, and that he had been six months in the island doing nothing but waiting patiently for an opportunity to get his case heard by some competent authority. Natives who had traded with him had been fined, and he asked that the embargo should be taken off, and the fines that had been levied upon these natives returned. He asked this as a British subject living in a country then under the British flag and British protection. Personally he had nothing to complain of, as the natives treated him kindly.

A meeting was held accordingly at the schoolhouse. Over a hundred of the principal chiefs and people were present. The Rev. W. Lawrence, the resident missionary, was also present. The Rev. J. Chalmers kindly interpreted. He explained that I should be glad to hear anything they had to say in reply to Mr. Mason's complaint, so that I could lay the whole case before the Governor of New Zealand on my return.

Vaka (an old chief) said he wished to speak of the law of the land about stores. In the time of their fathers foreigners were not allowed to live among them, as the land was small. Now they were only following in their fathers' footsteps. Donald and Edenborough had sent Mr. Mason to open a store, which the natives did not desire. They wished the Market-house only, as had been done since the introduction of the Gospel. All the world had been welcome to trade with them in that way, and there was no trouble. "Here is what we think," said Vaka: "Let the trading be all done at the Market-house, and only when a ship comes in. Our reasons are: (1) The smallness of the island; (2) strong drink will come; (3) horses will come and destroy all the breadfruit trees, as at Rarotonga; (4) debts will come; (5) other troubles will grow with it."

Tamatoa, Hama, Vaerua, Rangi, and other chiefs spoke to the same effect.

Mr. Mason said that he had never done and never would do anything to injure the people. He had no wish to import horses or sell liquor, and would not do so.

Vaka repeated his reasons, and asked that only the Market-house should be allowed. "As it was from the beginning so let it be to-day. We cannot agree to Mr. Mason's request."

Mr. Arthur Brown, from Rarotonga, thought British subjects should have the same privileges in these islands that the islanders themselves would have if they went anywhere to British territory—to New Zealand, for example.