

On the day after my arrival at Rarotonga I heard that fourteen casks of rum had just been, openly and in the ordinary course of business, landed in its harbour from a schooner that brought a general cargo from San Francisco. Practically, therefore, both the importation and sale of intoxicating liquors were uncontrolled and unrestricted.

Other laws against the manufacture and use of what is called "bush beer" were more strictly enforced at Rarotonga. The offenders under this law are natives only. Oranges, pine-apples, or bananas are pressed and fermented in large tubs by natives who form convivial parties for the occasion. As the proceedings must be secret, they are carried on in the dense bush, and operations are necessarily hurried. The juice is thus drunk while in full fermentation, is said in that state to be very intoxicating, and must be injurious in every way.

I desire here to state that I have to thank the Rev. J. Hutchin, resident missionary, who is himself an ardent prohibitionist, for giving me in this inquiry and in my general work, all the aid which his other onerous duties permitted. Mr. Hutchin was absent on an inspecting visit to the other islands on my arrival, but returned to Rarotonga about three weeks before I left for New Zealand.

To remedy the evident abuses in connection with the traffic was a difficult question. The laws of the Island of Rarotonga are made by the ruling Arikis of its three tribal districts, together with two other chiefs (also Arikis by right of descent, though not ruling), and by the Chief Judge of Avarua whose jurisdiction, however, does not extend beyond his own tribal district. The enforcement of the law rests with the three Arikis, who are sometimes styled Queens. They carefully avoid interference with each other's people, and resent jealously the appearance even of such assumption in any direction. My instructions were only to inquire and report. I made this clearly known to the Arikis, but it was difficult to make them understand the position. I was pressed on all sides not to return to New Zealand without at least advising what should be done, and, after careful consideration, came to the conclusion that I should not be justified in evading the responsibility of giving them all the assistance and moral support in my power.

I therefore urged the ruling Arikis to call their Council together, and to pass a suitable law absolutely prohibiting the sale or gift of imported spirits to natives under a penalty of \$150, the penalty to be payable in cash or hard labour, and not in the goods which existing laws authorised being taken in payment of fines, practically at the delinquent's own valuation. The Council was accordingly convened for the 22nd November. On the day before its meeting I called the foreign residents together and informed them what I had advised the Arikis to do, and that they must understand clearly that, when justly fined, the fine would in future have to be paid in cash. I was much pleased to find that the great majority of the foreign residents were anxious to see drunkenness put down and abuses cease.

The Council met on the 22nd November. The steamer "Richmond" arrived on the same day and left in the evening. I was enabled, therefore, to send to your Excellency an account—necessarily hastily written—of the proceedings of the Council, and of the law which they had just passed. The law did not come into operation till the 24th, it being requisite to have written copies, in Rarotongan and English, posted on the doors of such foreign residents as allowed this to be done. This, I found, was the only means of promulgation.

The law as passed will be found with the other laws in the appendix to my general report. The effect was to close all the drinking-houses at once, and to stop immediately the sale of liquor to the natives. I was assured before my departure on the 29th December, that there was still no drinking of imported liquors among the natives, and that the law was being strictly observed.

It soon became known to me that some of the Arikis and chiefs were not in favour of prohibition for themselves, and that they resented the application of this law to Natives only. They were taunted by some of the foreign residents, for their own purposes, and chafed under the apparent humiliation. To make a prohibitory law applicable to both races was impracticable unless the cordial co-operation and willing obedience of the natives and the foreign residents could be secured. The willing obedience of the latter could not be relied upon in any case unless they had some voice in making the laws of the country, in which most of them are permanently settled and have considerable property at stake. I therefore advised the chiefs to call a foreign resident to their Council, and to make the Council open to the public instead of confining the attendance as heretofore to invited guests. It was also desirable to end the practice of tribal feasting by which all meetings were celebrated, as it prevented any real well-considered business being done.

The Arikis readily agreed to the stoppage of tribal feasts and the appointment of a representative for the foreign residents. To avoid the risks attending an election in so mixed a population, and in the absence of regular electoral laws, they left to me the nomination of a representative for the ensuing year. This mode of proceeding seemed to me better than attempting to pass any law upon the subject. If found to work well, the practice will become established as a custom. If not, it can, in the absence of a positive law, be more easily discontinued.

To obtain their views, I convened a meeting of the foreign residents on the 18th December, and invited them to elect one of their number whom they might prefer to represent them in the Council. Three candidates were proposed—Mr. J. M. Gelling, Captain Rennie, and Mr. Goodwin. The two former are planters and the latter is a merchant. All three were fit and proper persons to take part in the Council. The choice was decided by ballot, and fell upon Mr. Gelling, who received twenty-two out of thirty-eight votes cast. He took his seat at the next Council, and was welcomed by the Arikis, who were pleased that he should have been selected.

I may here observe that an unexpected, but characteristic, difficulty soon occurred in connection with this election. Mr. Gelling lives in Tinomana's district. Queen Pa—incited no doubt by some of the few dissatisfied foreign residents—considered, as Tinomana thus had in the Council one of her *papaas* (so foreign residents are called in the native tongue), that it was right that she and Makea should have theirs also. Makea has travelled in other countries and seen too much of the world to