

No. 3.

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

MY LORD,—

Rarotonga, 9th May, 1891.

I returned in H.M.S. "Goldfinch" yesterday, after a successful trip round the Islands. Except at Aitutaki, the Proclamation was read at a public meeting of the chiefs and people. At Aitutaki I explained their position, and they were much pleased at finding themselves the subjects of the Queen. The other islanders were disposed at first to regard themselves as placed by the Protectorate in an inferior position, but are now satisfied.

At these meetings I submitted proposals also for the formation of a General Council for the Cook Islands (including Aitutaki) that would not interfere with each island in its specially local Government. Schools for learning English, hospitals, and preventing the introduction of disease, were the subjects that appeared to excite the chief interest in these proposals. In every case they were unanimously adopted, and a document signed, in which the chiefs and people undertook to send to Rarotonga a stated number of representatives, and, failing an opportunity to do so, authorised me to act for them and on their behalf. The schooner "Torea" left Rarotonga on her usual trading trip this morning; and I hope to see her back with the representatives before the end of this month. Meanwhile I am preparing laws for the Council's consideration. I hope to see it establish a regular public revenue, and some system in the future government of the Islands.

With reference to a seal, it would be advisable to have one for the "Cook Islands" instead of for the "Protectorate," as the Council and Government will be for the whole.

I send this by the "Linda Weber," and shall have the honour of reporting fully to your Excellency by the regular mail-steamer "Richmond," early in June.

The support given to me by the presence of Commander Kingsmill and his officers on these occasions, backed by their unvarying courtesy and kindness to the natives, has been very valuable. It would have been impossible without such support, and without the "Goldfinch," to have accomplished for some time what I hope may now be regarded as having been quickly done.

I have, &c.,

FREDERICK J. MOSS, British Resident.

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

No. 4.

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

MY LORD,—

Avarua, Rarotonga, 9th June, 1891.

I have the honour to inform your Excellency that the delegates (referred to in my last despatch, No. 8/91 of 9th May) arrived at Rarotonga by the schooner "Torea" on the 1st instant, accompanied by one of the *ariki*s from Mangaia and other chiefs of influence.

I enclose copy of the document signed by the chiefs of Mangaia on my visit in H.M.S. "Goldfinch." This will explain the scope and purpose of the present meeting, as the same paper was read at the other islands, and agreed to in the same way as at Mangaia.

I am glad to be able to inform your Excellency that all difficulty as to the organisation of a Government for the federated islands has been overcome; that a properly organised Legislature and Government are established, and that the only questions now are those of administration. The details I reserve for a separate despatch.

At the outset of the meeting local jealousy was strong. The Aitutaki delegates would have no one but the British Resident to preside, or to take the head of the Government. The Mangaian representatives sided with them; but I refused absolutely to allow myself to be placed in either position. The object being to teach the natives how to govern themselves, it was necessary at once to make them feel some sense of responsibility, and to make some attempt to sink the tribal jealousies that have so long distracted them.

In the end, Tepou o te Rangi, certainly the most competent man, was elected chairman of their Parliament, and the business proceeded well, the jealousies being rapidly softened by intercourse with each other, and by the kindly reception given to the strangers by the Rarotongans.

The greatest difficulty was in the formation of a Government, which, I had been assured on all sides, without exception, would be rendered by these tribal jealousies impossible. The only feasible plan seemed to me to make all the *ariki*s in the islands *ex officio* members of a Government. To this the Parliament agreed; but when it came to the election of one as a chief of the Government, and they found me determined not to allow them to put me in that position, they declined acting at all and referred it to the *ariki*s to decide for themselves.

The reference, I am glad to say, resulted in the election of Makea Takau, *ariki* of Avarua, who, by birth, character, and position, is well qualified to be the chief of the Government. Her residence being in Avarua, the British Resident will also be able to place himself in ready communication with Makea, and the work be much easier than if any other possible *ariki* had been elected. The most determined opponent to Makea was Pa, the *ariki* of Taketumu; but Pa has not only gracefully accepted the decision of the majority, but expressed her satisfaction at what she hopes is now the end of long estrangement, attributable, I believe, much more to tribal than to personal feeling.

I also enclose minutes of the first day's meeting. The law for "Regulating the future Government of the Islands" was ready for the delegates on their arrival, and they had therefore between two and three days for its consideration prior to the meeting. They then took two days for discussion, and will go back to their people able to explain its purport fully.