

1892.
NEW ZEALAND.

FEDERATION AND ANNEXATION: PACIFIC ISLANDS.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE BRITISH RESIDENT, RAROTONGA.

[In continuation of Parliamentary Paper A.—3A, Sess. II., 1891.]

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by command of His Excellency.

No. 1.

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

(No. 16/91.)

MY LORD,—

British Residency, Rarotonga, 31st August, 1891.

I have the honour to inform your Excellency with reference to the troubles at Mangaia, that the trading schooner "Goldfinch" being ready to leave on the 27th July, I took passage in her to Mangaia to save delay. Being a small vessel, built here, without passenger accommodation of any kind and with decks much crowded, the Commission appointed by the Government did not accompany me, but left a fortnight later in the "Torea." Mr. Henry Nicholas was good enough to go with me as interpreter and his services were especially useful. The Aitutaki *ariki*s, and others who were still at Rarotonga, desired also to go, and I gladly accepted their offer of service.

I returned to Rarotonga on the 26th instant, and have the pleasure of reporting that my visit has been successful in getting much valuable information, in establishing a regular Government, in cooling the intense bitterness among parties and inducing them to work together, in entirely freeing the Government by law from direct Church control, in getting rid of many grave abuses, and, finally, in obtaining a peaceable settlement of the compensation to be paid to Donald and Edenborough, and to Pearse.

I arrived at Mangaia on the 30th July, after a three days' passage. The Rev. Mr. Harris courteously offered me quarters at the Mission-house; I have also to thank him for many acts of attention during my stay, but deemed it better to live among the Natives, so as to be in free intercourse with them. I therefore took up my quarters with the Chief Kakerua, whose house has a large central room which answered all purposes.

On landing I was received by King John and Vaipo, but the chief of the dominant party, and others living in fear of them, kept studiously aloof. I have since found that they regarded me as exclusively a friend of the white man, bent on taking from them their land and country. Also, that Meringatangi, a noted local orator and preacher, had denounced me in the church as wicked, and anxious to break up their mission-schools, and do other terrible things. The result was that they had definitely resolved to keep away from me and to allow themselves to be killed rather than have their land taken or themselves made slaves. It was on this account that they had persistently refused to receive my letters, especially as Mr. Harris, carrying out his recent resolution to have nothing to do with politics, declined to open or have anything to do with them. Absurd as these ideas were, they had real influence with the chiefs, and are no doubt partly to be attributed to the idle threats and talk of some white men and the designs of others.

I found also that there were two well-defined parties, the dominant party being the one gathered round the Mission and receiving its sympathy and moral support. The Opposition was formed by Vaipo, a chief of great resolution and reputed eloquence, by King John, and by others who had come into collision with the Mission at various times, particularly during Pearse's affair. These parties appear tolerably equal in number; but the dominant party, by a system of ruthless fines and having with them the all-powerful Judges and police, had created a terror manifest in every action of the people. This terror proved at first a great bar to my work, and a greater difficulty in my way in obtaining trustworthy information.

I at once called a meeting of the chiefs and people and met them next day—31st July—at King John's house. At the appointed hour none of the Mission party—it is the only name by which I can properly distinguish them—had yet appeared, and, after giving them an hour's grace, I left for