

can learn), have proved themselves unfit to deal with this matter." The last state of Rarotonga cannot be worse, and I doubt if it can ever be so bad, as the first. At the end of 1890 I arrived in Rarotonga. The law had for years been total prohibition. Unsited to the people and unsupported by them it had fallen into complete desuetude. Drunkenness was universal, and nineteen known public-houses and shanties were selling liquor by the glass openly and at all hours. I had not been two hours in the place when I met the Rev. J. Chalmers, then on a short visit from New Guinea to this Island. Within five minutes he was speaking strongly to me on the liquor question. A day or two previously he had been invited to a Native-school examination and school-feast at Arorangi. So great, so open was the drunkenness, that he indignantly left and told the Native people that it was an insult to have asked him. That was the condition of affairs in 1890 with swarms of policemen. (I should say probably one-tenth of the whole population were acting in that capacity, for every church member was *ex officio* also a policeman.) Surely with their aid, and with the energetic help of the Rev. Mr. Hutchin, the then resident missionary, and a very ardent prohibitionist, the law should have been enforced, if ever it could be. I had come to inquire only into the difficulties between Europeans and the people of Mangaia, and had no right to interfere in other matters, but was pressed on all sides to advise what should be done.

After very careful consideration the present law was framed. The provisions were somewhat novel, but after an experience of two years I heartily support the statements of Tepou as to the great, the plain, the undeniable improvement that has been effected. I believe, Sir, that in this you will concur. How rarely, if ever, is a drunken Native now seen, unless in the bush, from secretly making and drinking liquor from oranges, pineapples, or bananas. For my own part, I know of no habitual drunkenness even among the drinkers of bush beer, and to them the police alone can look. Although the fines levied upon delinquents become the private property of the police, and they may therefore be regarded as likely to exercise due vigilance, I find that only one conviction for drinking bush beer has taken place during the last four months. For being drunk with imported liquor, except in rare cases of landing from shipboard, mentioned by Tepou, I find that there has been no conviction for the last two years.

The consumption of imported spirits among the Natives has probably increased, for many of them are sailors, and have been abroad, and accustomed to buy liquor in other lands. But whether that be so or not, I am bound to say that I regard Rarotonga as essentially a sober place, and that drunkenness is very rare among its people. Between its condition now and in 1890 there cannot be the least comparison, and I see no present reason to fear a return.

As to the charging of fees for the issue of permits to the Natives, I have nothing to say in its defence, and shall be glad to see that it is abandoned. But that it should not appear in the same light to a Native is intelligible, when we remember that for fifty or sixty years the Natives have been accustomed to look to this as the proper mode of payment for official services. The whole of the police, the Judges, and judicial and prison establishments have for all those years depended for payment on what they could extract as fines for offences—seldom criminal, but almost invariably against the moral law. With this notion ingrained into them by the system of administering justice, it is not surprising that they should have applied it to the minor work of issuing permits to purchase liquor. But I cannot share with you the opinion that the authorities have thereby proved themselves unfit to deal with this matter. I look rather to an indefinite sense of right, which they have always exhibited. This has saved them from complete demoralisation by their wretched judicial system in the past, and holds out, to my mind, no mean promise for the future. Bad as the charging for these permits may be, I no more believe that they will be issued merely for the fee than that the administration of justice has been in the past, and still is influenced, solely by a regard for the fines and profit which depend upon conviction.

I have always been anxious to see a change to a better and more regular system. But that will not be gained by taking an exaggerated view of the present evil. The first step, in my humble opinion, is to imbue the people with some notion of the public duty, and thus make practicable the imposition of direct taxes, by which Judges and police and other local officials could be placed in a more fitting position. Until then, improvement must be gradual and slow.

I have, &c.,

FREDERICK J. MOSS.

The Rev. W. R. Lawrence, Resident Missionary, L.M.S., Rarotonga.

Enclosure No. 4.

REVEREND SIR,—

British Residency, Rarotonga, 3rd February, 1893.

With reference to the portion of your letter of the 30th January in which you call my attention "to the fact that in Aitutaki where there has always been a total prohibition law, there has been established a bond in which liquor is kept, and out of which it is sold to people of that island."

I should be obliged for further information, as I cannot make out from my correspondence with that island what the position really is. I cannot, in the first place, trace any prohibition law as in force at the declaration of the Protectorate, though I have always been informed that there was such a law. No law has been passed since the declaration of the Protectorate; and I do not know how a bond could have been established without such a law. How is the liquor sold to the people of that island? I have never heard of such a sale. I heard only of a small quantity being landed (two cases of gin it was said), but that the greater part was sent off again to the vessel by the local Government.

I have, &c.,

FREDERICK J. MOSS.

The Rev. W. R. Lawrence, Resident Missionary, L.M.S., Rarotonga.