

in the last Parliament an Act was passed—20th July, 1895—“to guard against secret dealings in Native lands.” All future deeds were required to be registered in the office at Rarotonga within three months of execution, and if not so registered would not be recognised in any Court within the Federation.

By the same Act it was provided that all deeds executed at the time of its enactment must also be registered on or before the 31st December, 1895, on the same penalty, of non-recognition in any Court within the Federation.

The London Missionary Society's agent in Rarotonga has sent the deeds here to be registered, and I presume the agent at Mangaia was not aware of the passage of the Act of 1895 when sending his to Sydney.

There cannot be any objection to the registration of deeds in the office of the High Commissioner as a means of additional security against accidents, but to prevent such registration being used to frustrate the purpose of the Cook Islands Act, “to guard against secrecy in dealing with native lands,” it would be desirable that no such deeds should be received at the High Commissioner's office unless previously registered in the Cook Islands.

His Excellency the Earl of Glasgow, G.C.M.G.,
Governor of New Zealand, &c.

I have, &c.,
F. J. Moss.

No. 8.

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

MY LORD,—

Cook Islands, British Residency, Rarotonga, 12th October, 1896.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Excellency's despatch of the 10th September, respecting registration of the property of the London Missionary Society at Mangaia, and requesting me “to take what steps seem best to you in order that the property in question may be registered properly.”

I have, in reply, to state that there has not been, and will not be, any difficulty in getting the deeds of the said property registered here; but no application for that purpose has ever been made by the Rev. Mr. Cullen, nor by any one else, on behalf of the society.

I am informed by the Registrar that the society's agent at Rarotonga—the Rev. Mr. J. Hutchin—registered all the deeds in his possession for Rarotonga property on the 5th November, 1895, and at the same time gave notice that deeds for property at Atiu and Aitutaki would be sent in as soon as the Rev. Mr. Lawrence returned from England, as they were in his charge at Aitutaki. Mr. Hutchin was informed, in reply, that the necessary measures to authorise their registration after the 31st December, 1895, would be taken on Mr. Lawrence's return. I presume Mr. Cullen, as a member of the society's Cook Island committee, is aware that this was done.

I have carefully perused the correspondence—three enclosures—sent by your Excellency, and return it herewith, as requested. The Act compelling registration was passed here in July, 1895. The first intimation which I received of Mr. Cullen's application to Fiji was by your Excellency's despatch of the 25th October, 1895. This disposes of Mr. Cullen's “impression” that the passage of the Act, which he says was “sprung upon them,” had any connection with that application. Nor is he correct in stating that previous to the passage of the Act there was no possibility of registering in Rarotonga. A registry was opened here on the 17th July, 1891, and made use of by many persons, though registration was only optional. The object in making it compulsory was well known and clear. Chiefs alienated land on renewable leases without the knowledge of their tribe, who, in ignorance of such leases, and of the practically permanent alienation they implied, allowed unopposed occupation, which in after years would be pleaded as a full ratification of the act of the chief. To guard against this the registration and public advertisement of such registration were enforced by the Act of 1895, while five clear months were allowed to bring all deeds then in existence under its provisions. It might have been fairly assumed that a measure of this kind would meet with Mr. Cullen's cordial sympathy and support, and I am at a loss to understand what ground he can have for the “complaint,” or against whom it can be made, which, in his letter of the 13th June, 1896, he speaks of laying before your Excellency, and of asking “for an inquiry” into the matter.

I have, &c.,

His Excellency the Earl of Glasgow, G.C.M.G.,
Governor of New Zealand, &c.

FREDERICK J. MOSS.

No. 9.

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

MY LORD,—

Cook Islands, British Residency, Rarotonga, 21st October, 1896.

Referring to my letter, No. 10, of the 22nd August, in which I reported the opening of the No. 5. Rarotonga Council, and sent your Excellency the opening message on that occasion, I have now the honour to enclose cuttings from the newspaper *Te Torea* of the 5th, 12th, 19th, and 26th September, and the 3rd, 10th, and 17th of October, which report the proceedings of the Council to the 13th instant. I have to add that the elected House met yesterday, the 20th, and passed the Appropriation Act, after which the Arikis met and approved it, together with the amendment of “The Public Schools Act, 1895,” which were the only two laws passed by the Council during the session. Both were approved by me, and are now in force.

The amendment of the Public Schools Act increases the education rate, and places the schools on a sound financial basis. The long and keen discussion which the proposed increase elicited indicates the progress made by the Maoris in the Government, and appears to me of sufficient