

Enclosure No. 4.

The GOVERNMENT to the CHAIRMAN, Hospital Board.

SIR,—

Rarotonga, 15th July, 1897.

I am directed to thank you for sending Dr. Craig's letter of 13th July, respecting the proportions of disease attributable to drink among the cases treated by him, and to ask if you will be kind enough to state the nature of the twenty-four cases in which disease was the result of or influenced by over-indulgence in alcohol.

Dr. Craig also says, "The proportion of such cases is large, but it must be remembered that in this community there are special facilities and encouragement given for the liquor traffic among natives."

I am directed to ask that Dr. Craig will also be kind enough to state what are the "special facilities and encouragement" to which he refers.

I have, &c.,

MAKEA DANIELA,

Clerk to the Cook Islands Government.

The Chairman, Hospital Board, Rarotonga.

[To this letter no reply has yet been received.—25th July, 1897.]

Enclosure No. 5.

Report from DR. CALDWELL to the BRITISH RESIDENT.

SIR,—

Rarotonga, 15th July, 1897.

Your letter, dated the 6th July, has reached me. You ask for the number of cases among natives treated by me in Rarotonga, both in hospital and private practice, which were directly or indirectly traceable to the use of intoxicating liquor.

I will undertake to comply with your request, though, not having classified my cases in my case-book with special reference to this subject, I must not be expected to be strictly accurate, but only approximately correct. I may add that I consider my position here among the natives to be such as to enable me to learn the cause of their illness with far more accuracy than if I held a position of either ecclesiastical or political authority over them.

Testimony which has come freely from many of the natives themselves convinces me that it is becoming comparatively rare for them to be satisfied with the "bush beer" alone. I have known a barrel of that article to be almost abandoned on a Sunday afternoon by those who made it when they learned that a little way off another barrel had been made and "fortified" with *kava papua* (foreign spirits).

It is not uncommon among the intellectual class of men in other countries to see persons using wines and liquors moderately for years before they drink to excess. As to natives, I cannot recall a single one who has been able to restrain himself to drink habitually in moderation. Even the best of those who drink at all have been known to drink to intoxication. Once or twice I have thought that an exception had been found, but further acquaintance has shown that my conclusions were drawn before the testimony was complete. This is the result of my observation among the more intellectual of the natives. Among the rank and file, who live in the bush, there seems to be no self-restraint whatever, so long as the intoxicant can be obtained.

One who confines his observation to the street and public places can form no idea of the degrading effect of the Sunday "beer-barrel" in the back-bush lands. Men, women, and sometimes children gather round the barrel, and drink until crazed by intoxication. Then, half-naked, and sometimes wholly so, they sing lewd songs called *ute*, until stupified by continual drinking, and sleep and stupor put an end to their shameful conduct. I have seen it myself, and know the description to be too true to depict all the evils of "bush beer," mixed with the *kava papua*.

Many of the illegitimate births so common here, and the shameless licentiousness, of which the effects are so often forced upon the attention of the medical practitioner, are traceable directly to these orgies, or to the depraved moral sensibilities resulting from them.

"Bush beer" is chiefly dangerous from the decaying fruit consumed with the beer, since it contains but a small percentage of alcohol. The heavy liquors are objectionable, because of the percentage of alcohol found in them. The fortified "bush beer" now in common use combines the evils of both and the advantages of neither.

More of this intoxication is seen on Sunday afternoons and Sunday nights than at any other time. This is due, in part, to the enforced Sunday idleness of those who do not care to spend the time in the church.

These evils are, to my mind, an object-lesson on the futility of trying to make people religious by Sunday laws. Physically and morally, non-church-going natives are far better off when they work every day in the week. People who intelligently and conscientiously observe the Lord's rest day need no Sunday laws, for they could not be induced either to labour or to play in holy time. Hence, to my mind, Sunday (or Sabbath) laws of human enactment are unnecessary, meddlesome, and pernicious.

As before observed, I am unable to give you full statistics of our work in Rarotonga, since some of our earlier records have been lost. I have counted, in all, fifty-two cases of serious illness which resulted, I believe, directly from the use of intoxicants, and of these fifty-two five died.