

No. 15.

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

MY LORD,—

Cook Islands, British Residency, Rarotonga, 16th October, 1897.

I have the honour to inform your Excellency that the Local Council of Rarotonga, which began its session on the 1st September, has since met at intervals, but only to adjourn, and now stands adjourned till the 2nd November, evidently waiting the answer to the Arikis' petition for my withdrawal.

A new idea has been put into the heads of the chiefs—that they have a right to the unrestricted control of the revenue, Federal and local, under the guarantee of governing themselves, which they regard as given at the hoisting of the flag in 1888 and the Proclamation of the Protectorate in 1891, at both of which dates no revenue of any kind was in existence.

In the meantime the members are discussing the liquor and the education questions in their several districts, so that the time is not being altogether lost.

In connection with the interminable liquor question, a correspondence has taken place between myself and the Rev. J. Hutchin, the head of the London mission in the Cook Islands. I feel bound, reluctantly, to trouble your Excellency with this correspondence, which is enclosed. The main purpose was to obtain from Mr. Hutchin a plain refutation of the gross exaggerations to which currency has been given, but Mr. Hutchin is himself an extreme among Prohibitionists, and in communication, I believe, with that party in New Zealand. Another object was to meet a cry, newly raised, that the law has been broken from the outset in the mode of issuing permits to natives. I can state positively that nothing whatever was heard of this till the Licensing Officer, at my suggestion, took a new reading of the law two or three months ago. I enclose his letter to me on that point.

Mr. Hutchin refers to a statement by the Rev. Mr. Laurence to me, in a letter dated the 31st January, 1893, on this point, but Mr. Laurence's quotation from the Act was only incidental, and had nothing whatever to do with the point lately raised. I have, &c.,

FREDERICK J. MOSS,
British Resident.

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

Enclosure No. 1.

REVEREND SIR,—

British Residency, Rarotonga, 12th October, 1897.

Some one has sent to me a copy of the *Prohibitionist*, a New Zealand journal, of the 18th September, containing a leading article on the liquor question in Rarotonga. I do not know the paper, and the article is so rabid as to be in itself unworthy of notice. It quotes, however, the *Lyttelton Times* as having in a recent issue drawn public attention to "the fearful havoc strong drink is causing in Rarotonga." The *Lyttelton Times* is further referred to as having based its own remarks upon a report by "Dr. Craig, the Medical Officer of Rarotonga." This so-called report must be a letter to which no one attached importance here, but which has apparently derived fictitious weight from ignorance of the circumstances under which Dr. Craig's letter was written, and the false idea that he is "the Medical Officer of Rarotonga."

You are aware that no native can obtain liquor without the written authority of the Ariki of his district, or the appointed representative of such Ariki. That abuses have sometimes crept in was unavoidable, but it appears to me that justice to the native administrators of the liquor-law calls for a refutation of the gross exaggeration of these abuses to which currency has been given.

I should be glad of your aid in doing so by the outgoing mail, and think I may fairly ask that aid, as the Arikis and the persons appointed by them are all members and communicants of the Mission Church.

I have, &c.,

FREDERICK J. MOSS.

Enclosure No. 2.

DEAR SIR,—

Rarotonga, 12th October, 1897.

I have received this day a letter from you, in relation to the drink traffic at Rarotonga, in which you say, "You are aware that no native can obtain liquor without the written authority of the Ariki of his district, or the appointed representative of such Ariki."

The liquor-law passed on the 24th December, 1890, distinctly states, in clause No. 9, "In the case of natives, the permit shall only be issued on the written authority of the ruling Ariki of the district."

Abuses have certainly crept in, and these have been brought before your notice by me on more than one occasion.

It is certainly a very difficult matter to deal with the liquor traffic in every country, and the right method has yet to be discovered.

F. J. Moss, Esq., British Resident, Rarotonga.

I remain, &c.,

JOHN K. HUTCHIN.

Enclosure No. 3.

REVEREND SIR,—

British Residency, Rarotonga, 12th October, 1897.

Thanks for your letter of this day's date. You correctly quote the law of 1890, and are aware that, in accordance with the law, no liquor has been issued to a native by the Licensing Officer except upon the written authority of the Ariki, or the Ariki's appointed mouthpiece, the Judge of the Ariki's Court.