

My main purpose in addressing you was, as stated, to ask your aid in counteracting the slanderous exaggerations which have led newspapers abroad to speak of "the havoc caused by strong drink among the natives of Rarotonga," and of the place itself as a "pandemonium of drunkenness, &c." You must be well aware that these are scandalous and gross exaggerations. To me it appears that the good name of the mission, with its great power over the natives through the church, quite as much as that of the Government and the Maori people, called for their prompt refutation.

Rev. J. K. Hutchin, Mission House, Rarotonga.

I have, &c.,

FREDERICK J. MOSS.

Enclosure No. 6.

DEAR SIR,—

Rarotonga, 14th October, 1897.

I wonder who your informant was that is so particular and exact as to the number of houses "openly retailing the worst liquor." Another thing would be interesting to know, and that is, the names of those who kept these nineteen houses, and also the persons who supplied them with the worst liquor.

You say you found these statements "as to gross and open drunkenness prevalent among the Maoris, both men and women, more than justified." Then, you must have seen the gross and open drunkenness yourself. For my part, I have never believed in the tale as to the nineteen houses. I do not at all accept it as a statement of the facts of the case, as far as my knowledge is concerned.

You go on to say that the law was total prohibition, that I was a member *ex officio* of the Arikis' Council. I deplore the fact that the total prohibition law was not carried out. I can assure you that it was not for want of speaking on my part. I spoke against the liquor traffic here long before I knew you. As for being present at the meeting of the Arikis, the missionary was present, but had no vote. He was present to give advice if he was asked for it; that was all.

The duty of a missionary is to lay down principles—to endeavour to implant right ideas of duty in the minds of the people. He has nothing to do with the carrying-out of the law. So, as regards the liquor traffic, the responsibility of seeing that the law of 1890 was properly carried out rests upon yourself, and not upon me.

As you yourself admirably put it, "To be good and just is what your missionaries have been trying to teach you for the last seventy-five years, and is what they profess to teach you now; but the work of a British Resident is something more. He is to show to you, and to all the Maori people, how to make good laws, and how to deal out justice to Europeans, as well as to Maoris, and how best in every way to promote the progress of the Cook Islands, and of the whole of the people. It is, then, his work also to see that you do not leave these things undone." That is to say, it is the duty of the missionary to teach the Maoris the principles of goodness and justice, and that it is the duty of the British Resident to help the Maori people to make good laws, and to see that these laws are carried out.

Then, as regards the police, whom you state numbered 150 when you arrived, am I responsible for the fact that there were 150 (accepting your statement as correct)? The church members formed the most respectable members of the community; hence they were chosen; but not all male church members were policemen. The policemen were appointed by the chiefs from among their tenants. The police never supposed that they were perfect, and acted according to instructions given to them. By your stating that I was a member of the Council of the Arikis, and immediately afterwards that the police were church members, you seem to insinuate that there was a connection between Church and State, which I emphatically deny.

As regards the drunkenness of the last year or two not approaching by a long way that which prevailed with prohibition at its very best, in 1890, I must say that you cannot be a judge in the matter, as you were never here before 1890. Besides, prohibition was not at its very best in 1890. There has been a great and gradual increase in the drink traffic since you have been here.

As to "the Ariki's mouthpiece," the law of 1890, I again say, says nothing about the Ariki having a mouthpiece. I always thought that we were to take words in the natural sense they bear. "A ruling Ariki" is plainly required by the law to sign the permits. So Mr. Laurence understood, for he wrote to you, under date the 31st January, 1893, "As I understand the law, any native desiring to buy spirituous or fermented liquor must first obtain a permit for the same from the Queen, or chief of the district of the island in which he resides." This is the natural interpretation of the law, then: that the ruling Ariki should sign the permit. It was neither an "extreme course" for the Licensing Officer to take to refuse any but the Ariki's own signature, neither did he certainly strain the law; he simply did his duty, for clause 4 of the Act states, "The Licensing Officer shall issue such liquor only in accordance with the provisions of the law." I did not mean to say that you did not answer Mr. Laurence's letter, as you seemed to think I meant. Charging a fee for a permit is much the same as the sale of a permit; and this was not contemplated by the Act. As regards church discipline, we strive to arouse the conscience, and do not believe in exercising it rashly, knowing that we ourselves are also in the body. All, therefore, that I have contended for is that the ruling Ariki is required by the law to sign the permit for a native, and that also the charging of a fee for the permit is contrary to the law.

As regards "practically giving aid to those whose only objects are avowedly to gratify personal rancour," I can assure you that I cherish no such feeling against you, and appreciate your difficulties. As I said in a previous letter, the liquor question taxes the wit of a man to deal with it; and I give you credit for sincerely intending to make a good law against liquor, yet it should have been very strictly carried out. As the Licensing Officer said, "Laws which are made must be obeyed, and not treated with contempt" (see Report of Licensing Officer, 2nd July, 1892).