

I think it was stated, to less than £30 for a year. The European residents who want better roads should appeal to local Government, and express their willingness to submit to substantial taxation for the purpose. The natives are probably satisfied with the roads as they are, and a freedom from rates.

(21.) The British Resident, from the first, promoted the teaching of English in the native schools. As your Excellency is aware, he was instrumental in getting passed a law by the local Council for Rarotonga by which the teaching of English was made compulsory in all schools. When this was passed the only schools were those of the London Missionary Society. Since then the Seventh Day Adventists have established a mission, and the Roman Catholics have established a mission. Under the local law there are three public schools in Rarotonga—one in each of the three Arikis' districts. The real grievance with the natives now is that they find that their children look upon the mode of conveying instruction so far as possible by means of English and not by their native tongue as a hardship. At first, notwithstanding this, the schools were nevertheless popular. As far as I can gather, the recent political disputes have acted detrimentally on the attendance at the public schools. I understand that the Roman Catholics are quite content with the compulsory teaching of English, and that their school, though only recently established, is fairly flourishing. I think it is premature to conclude that the compulsory system of teaching English should be abandoned. It has been suggested that the compulsion should not commence till after the children have first learned to read and write with ease in their own language. A paper was prepared for me by Mr. Hutchin on the education question; it is herewith (marked 13 in red). The opinions expressed are those of an opponent of the system promoted by Mr. Moss. I am satisfied that the Church missionary schools are well conducted, and are doing good work; but, so far as I can judge, I think that the petitioners are premature in condemning the system and the schools; at any rate, the failure, if there be a failure, is no just ground for condemning Mr. Moss as unfit to be British Resident.

(22.) Your Excellency is aware that Mr. Moss, soon after his appointment as Resident, promoted a system of regulation of sales of drink, in place of prohibition. The reports he made on the subject showed that at first not only he, but other disinterested and capable persons, thought the new system an improvement on the old—prohibition, with its attendant illicit sales. It appears, however, that till last July or August the Arikis were very lax in the performance of their duties under the liquor laws. By that law, as already stated, a native could not legally obtain liquor by purchase or gift without a permit from his Ariki; but the Arikis have a practice of deputing to a chief under them—who is spoken of as the Arikis' mouthpiece—the performance of some duties devolving on the Ariki. The practice under the Act was for the Ariki's mouthpiece to grant the permit, and, still following general native custom, the chief or mouthpiece required a payment for the trouble of granting the permit. It would seem that the Natives had been too easily getting these permits, and that drunkenness from the use of imported liquor was becoming common. Attention was called to this, and eventually—about six months ago—the practice of charging for permits was abandoned, and the Licensing Officer notified that he would not accept permits signed by any one but the Ariki. The result has been that the Arikis have been for some time past refused permits. I gather from disinterested persons that since the Licensing Officer has acted strictly in the matter, and the Arikis have refused all permits to natives, there has been a marked diminution in drunkenness amongst natives. It is probable that natives are still able to get drink illegally by purchase or gift from Europeans who have themselves bought under a permit. In my opinion, there is no ground for complaint against the British Resident in respect of the liquor law. Even if it be thought, as Lord Onslow seems to have thought, that there should be total prohibition, the fact that Mr. Moss thought regulation would produce better results can be no ground for removing him. In my opinion, the European residents would complain if prohibition were introduced again. I ascertained from the Natives that they still thought there should be regulation for Europeans, but that they concluded that there should be prohibition for natives. That is practically the present system—so long as the Arikis refuse permits to natives. I doubt, however, whether even in the case of Europeans the system is a good one. In practice a permit is given for as much as three bottles; it cannot be for less than one bottle. This is well enough for those who can restrain themselves, but for those not well able to do that it seems likely that a system by which only a bottle can be obtained at a time means that in some cases, at any rate, the buyer will not be easy till he has finished his bottle. The Licensing Officer assures me that in the case of a person known to be unable to restrain himself a permit is not granted even for a single bottle.

I am not able to make any recommendation as to the advisability of introducing a law of total prohibition. At any rate, there is no urgent necessity for any change in the law so long as the Arikis refuse the natives permits. I could not get any accurate returns of the number of convictions of drunkenness or illicit sales. The administration of this law is in the hands of native Judges and policemen, and it seems probable that there is not so much activity in enforcing the law against Europeans and natives as might be desired.

But all this is beside the question of the removal of Mr. Moss. It is, as I think, quite unreasonable to charge against Mr. Moss inconveniences necessarily resulting from residence in a country in the condition as to civilisation which Rarotonga and the Cook Islands are.

This concludes the grounds stated in the petition of Mr. Kohn and some other European residents.

XV. I now proceed to deal with each head of the complaint made by the Cook Islands Parliament, premising that many of these heads are identical, or substantially so, with those made in Mr. Kohn's petition. As to those that are identical, or substantially so, I shall do no more than say so, referring to my report on Mr. Kohn's petition for all that I have to say as to these heads:—