

you that they will give them every consideration. I have to thank you on behalf of the Government for the earnest way in which you have shown your desire to promote good feeling between New Zealand and Niue. The Government will always see that the house you have built is kept in proper order, and they will fully appreciate the kindness and liberality with which you have come forward to do this good work. On behalf of the party and myself I must now say good-bye, but we shall not forget the hearty way in which you have received us.

During the day there was a good deal of dancing by the Natives, the warlike element, which had been entirely absent from the performances of the other islanders, being exhibited here prominently, particularly in one dance, which was said to represent the reception accorded to Captain Cook on the occasion of his visit to the island. Another, in which the performers were a number of boys hideously blackened and girls dressed in white, was said to be symbolical of the heathen darkness of early times contrasted with the Christian enlightenment of to-day.

Before the gathering dispersed large presents of food, &c., were made by the Natives to the Minister and party, and the Hon. Mr. Mills presented Togia with the New Zealand ensign, pictures of the King and Queen, and some books, for which the old King returned his thanks very warmly, saying that he would always hold the flag sacred. In accordance with the custom of the island, the Hon. Mr. Mills while in Niue planted a couple of young cocoanut-palms. It is usual to ask a distinguished visitor to perform this ceremony, and it is understood that on the occasion of any subsequent visit to the island he is entitled to the fruits of his tree.

From a letter received from Togia since our return from the islands it would appear that any resentment he may have felt at the annexation of Niue to New Zealand has now passed away, although his antipathy to Rarotonga still exists. He says, "It is very good that my kingdom is not to be connected with Rarotonga. Let New Zealand and Niue be one kingdom."

The Minister in charge of the islands has introduced legislation which will separate the administration of Niue from that of Rarotonga, and, it is hoped, place matters on a more satisfactory footing than has been the case hitherto.

At 5.30 p.m. we went on board, and the vessel steamed westward for the Friendly Islands.

VAVAU.

On Monday, the 18th May, about 4.30 in the afternoon, having completed a run of 257 miles, we entered the magnificent land-locked harbour of Vavau, and by 6 o'clock we had made fast to the wharf at the Village of Nieafu. Early next morning a number of the party visited the flat-topped hill of Telaui, about two miles from the village. From this point one is able to obtain a fairly comprehensive view of the harbour and the many small islands which help to form it. During the morning a number of the local traders waited upon the Minister in the saloon, and represented to him the disadvantages under which they laboured as compared with traders in the Cook Islands in respect of their shipments of fruit to New Zealand. They pointed out that their oranges on arrival at Auckland were condemned by the Inspector and destroyed if they were found to be affected by the fruit fly maggot in any degree, while those from the Cook Islands were carefully picked over, and the sound fruit fumigated and allowed to be sold. They also mentioned that their imports from New Zealand were considerable, and asked that they be placed on as favourable a footing as the merchants in Rarotonga. The Minister promised to bring the matter before Cabinet on his return to New Zealand. We left Nieafu at 1 o'clock, and steamed down the harbour to the Cave of the Bats, on Kava Island, one of the many famous and interesting caverns in the Vavau Archipelago. Several members of the party had preceded us in the steamer's launch, and after the remainder of our number had explored the cave the "Mapourika" proceeded on her way to Nukualofa, in the Island of Tongatabu, southward 180 miles.

TONGATABU.

We reached the wharf at Nukualofa at 7.30 a.m. on Wednesday, the 20th May. Later in the morning the Hon. Mr. Mills called on the British Consul, Mr. Hamilton Hunter, who, after some conversation, accompanied the Minister to the residence of the Rev. J. B. Watkin, a gentleman of long residence and much influence in Tonga. At the request of Mr. Watkin, His Majesty King George kindly arranged to receive the party at the palace, and also to have a recital given in the evening by the Tongan choirs, of whose excellent singing we had heard before leaving New Zealand. Accordingly, in the afternoon the Minister and members proceeded to the palace, where they were cordially received by King George. The King is of a rather shy and reserved disposition, and is not inclined to converse very freely with strangers. Later on, however, the Hon. Mr. Mills had a long talk with him in the palace-grounds. All reserve and formality were thrown aside, and His Majesty entered heartily into the conversation. In the evening the party attended the Royal chapel, and listened to a fine programme of music rendered by the King's choir, and the Boys' College choir, separately and in combination. The singing was entirely unaccompanied, and, including as it did such items as the "Hallelujah Chorus," the performance in every way was a remarkable one. At the conclusion of the singing the Minister thanked the choirs on behalf of himself and party, and complimented them highly on their performance, which he thought would compare favourably with any choral work he had ever heard. We left Nukualofa at 6 o'clock the following morning, Thursday, the 21st May, and at 9 o'clock on Friday night we entered the harbour of Suva, at Fiji, 420 miles to the north-west.

SUVA.

At 7 o'clock a.m. on Saturday the "Mapourika" made fast to the wharf at Suva. At 10 o'clock His Excellency the Governor, Sir Henry Jackson, received the Minister and party at Government House. His Excellency expressed his pleasure at meeting so many members of the New Zealand Parliament, and regretted that the party had not arrived in time to be present at a