

the use of the Natives. They altogether ignore the fact that under mission rule the Native inhabitants have dwindled down from six thousand to less than fifteen hundred, and that the island was found equal to the support of the six thousand. I have succeeded in inducing the Council to pass an Ordinance giving the Resident Commissioner power to tax unimproved lands; there is therefore a chance that the owners may plant the waste lands under the pressure of the tax.

THE LIQUOR LAWS.

The Licensing Act of 1904 is working very smoothly. Very little spirituous liquor has been imported either by the Government or residents of the Cook Islands during the past year, and it may safely be said that few communities take less interest in the traffic than Rarotonga, where for the past six years the European inhabitants have been most abstemious.

The following return will show the amount of liquor imported into the Cook Islands during the years 1903, 1904, and 1905, inclusive:—

Description of Liquor.	1903. £	1904. £	1905. £
Beer	241	89	16
Brandy	22	8	11
Geneva	95	48	21
Rum	21	15	...
Whisky	305	177	106
Wine (sparkling)	13	...	...
Claret	84	123	82
Total	781	460	236

From the above it will be seen that the importations for the year 1905 do not exceed one bottle for each adult in this island, and this is in itself a refutation of the nonsense with which the Government of New Zealand has been troubled on this subject. The fact is, that from the time that the authority of the Native chiefs to issue permits was cancelled, there has been little, if any, traffic with the Natives in imported liquor. The only Natives who ever did use imported liquor consistently were the very sober members of the community. The drunkards naturally prefer quantity, and have never wasted their money in the purchase of intoxicating drink that they can make with little trouble. This beer they have brewed for the last forty years, and consume it on the Sabbath and following days. This fact is known to every European in the island, and in my opinion the custom will never be put down, for the police are wise enough to avoid seeing offences of this nature. It must be remembered that the police have to live among the people of this island, and therefore refrain from exasperating those members of the tribe who would surely retaliate by destroying the property of a too zealous policeman.

I cannot say that the manufacture of bush beer has been increased in this island by reason of the total prohibition of imported liquor. It appears to me that the Licensing Act of 1904 has had no effect either one way or the other on the local productions. The only persons who feel a natural irritation against the Act are the Arikis and minor chiefs, who complain—not without reason—that they have by this measure been reduced below the level of Chinamen. They fail to see why they, who have always been the sober and law-abiding element of these islands, should be treated as subjects for prohibition. They quote the case of Fiji as an example. There prohibition is the rule, but an exception has always been made in favour of the chiefs who have deserved exemption by reason of their sobriety. In answer to this I pointed out to the chiefs that the people of New Zealand knew but little of these islands and their inhabitants, and imagined that the work of the mission had been hindered by unlimited supplies of European spirits, and that the Arikis and chiefs were enthusiastic prohibitionists. Every one in the Group knows that these views are false. The Arikis and leading chiefs do desire sobriety and prohibition pure and simple for all those people who are unable to restrain their desire for spirituous liquor; but they do not, and never have, desired that form of prohibition which confounds the sober man with the drunkard, and therefore they feel acutely the slight conveyed by the Licensing Act, which from their point of view deprives them of the old mana of a Native chief, and shows that they have lost status by becoming British subjects. This is the Maori view, and though I am not prepared to deny that the present system is hard on men like the late Pa Ariki and Makea Daniela, or women like Makea and Tinomana, I must still say that I distinctly approve of prohibition. Hitherto the supposed traffic in imported liquor and the consequent evil effects of the same has been used to excuse many shortcomings. It has been used to hide the much more serious evil of bush-beer drinking, at which both men, women, and children attend throughout the year on each and every Sabbath. This last is a very real evil, and one that the mission appear afraid to face. As I have already said, the police will not give information against these meetings at the beer-tub; but if the mission chose, they could materially assist in putting down the evil, by calling on their deacons and church members to act as police, as they did in old days.

THE NORTHERN ISLANDS.

Copra is the life of the coral islands—the alpha and omega of the atoll—but the supply of this article of commerce is limited by the requirements of the inhabitants. Rakahanga has an area of rather over 900 acres, all closely planted with cocoa palms, but the export does not exceed 200 tons. This may be accounted for by the fact that in all the coral islands the water is bad or at best brackish, and for this reason the people use large quantities of immature nuts for drink, and many mature nuts for food. In fact the inhabitants of Manihiki and Rakahanga cannot use less than