

I can now report that all the land of Rarotonga of economic value, or capable of occupation, has been surveyed and awarded to the owners so far as they can be ascertained. I use this limitation when reporting on the work of this island for the reason that for the last seventy-five years the chiefs and Arikis of Avarua and Arorangi in this island have lost no opportunity of depriving the people of all knowledge of their genealogy and family history, even fining those old men who, by means of their grandchildren, attempted to write a record of the family history, and confiscating the books for their own use. As a natural consequence of these acts, the rank-and-file do not now know who they are, or the true ground of their claim to any land, and because of this want of knowledge are content in many cases to appear in the books of the Court as *tanu kai* (serfs). This campaign against the rights and liberties of the people has been carried out with great ability, and for the most part has been designed to destroy certain of the old families who were rivals of the Makea and Vakaatini families.

Even since the London Mission have established themselves on this island the Arikis of Avarua and Arorangi have striven to aggrandise themselves at the expense of their people, and the system whereby they had well nigh succeeded was exceedingly well considered and astute. On the death of any leading mataiapo or rangatira, an excuse has been found for placing the family title and lands in charge of some creature of the Ariki. Generally speaking, the pretence was that the young heir was wanting in ability, or too young to govern his people, and therefore until he had reached the age of reason he was to be governed by a mentor appointed by the Ariki during his minority or alleged incompetence. This theory was good enough, but in practice it was as bad as the Ariki intended it to be, for the rightful heirs have never been reinstated. The usurper became the humble servant of the Ariki, and paid *atinga* for lands that had never paid this tribute while in the hands of the rightful owners, and the Ariki, knowing that the man in possession dared not dispute his claims now, asserted that the land had always been Ariki land. If the dispossessed man tried to assert himself he would probably be reduced to the position of a pig-feeder, and his descendants would never learn that their ancestors had been men of rank and influence.

The end sought by the Arikis was very simple. Under the old Maori custom the Arikis had no mana over the lands of independent mataiapos, or independent tribes, neither had they mana over the lands of those rangatiras who had received their shares in the family lands from former Arikis. These independant chiefs could be called upon to perform two obligations—viz., the *arevananga* and the *ara tiroa*—the first is the universal obligation that the chief's house shall be either built or repaired by the whole tribe; the second refers to the liability of the whole tribe to find food for such strangers as may throw themselves on the hospitality of the Arikis. These were time honoured customs that were cheerfully obeyed, but the modern Ariki strives for more than this. He has been taught to regard himself as king by divine right, and they have all seen clearly enough that to make themselves absolute they must assert a right to all the land. This is the goal at which every Makea and Tinomana has aimed for the last seventy years, and would most certainly have attained but for the institution of the Land Titles Court, who intervened in time to save and reinstate some of the old and real owners of the land.

Lest it may be thought that I have exaggerated the actions of the Arikis, I will mention a few of the leading cases of unjust robbery, evidence of which has been given in the Land Titles Court. There were originally seven independent mataiapo living at Tupapa, and it was these men who set up the present family of Makea as Arikis, and from that time lived under the mana of Makea. These men are as follows: Te Ariki Taraare, Vakapora, Tamaiva, Te Puretu, Uirangi, Te Awa, and Pi. Of these, I found that the real Taraare is the wife of a mission student who has been ousted from all of her Avarua lands by a man who is not even a member of the family, but an interloper from Ngatangia—a man whose grandfather had found favour in the sight of the Makea of that period, and was appointed for the reasons I have already given.

The true Vakapora is a man named Enuu, whose father having been left a young orphan, had in the usual manner been deprived of both land and authority. Subsequently his son Enuu had been deprived of the small piece of land on which his father had lived and worked. The Court has, however, reinstated these people on this last piece of land.

The present Tamaiva is only half a Rarotongan, and the junior member of his family; but assisted by the Arikis and their friends, he had ousted the real Tamaiva (Iotea) from all the family lands. The Court has in this case placed all of the owners on the lands of Tamaiva, and there will be no further trouble.

The Court found that Uirangi and Awa had been driven from their lands by Taraare, who was supported by Makea. Taraare had called on these descendants of Tangia to build an out-house for him, and naturally these independent mataiapos refused to work for a man of doubtful origin, and who had never had jurisdiction over them. The result was that Uirangi, Pi, and Awa were driven from their homes, and Taraare seized and held their ancestral lands until the true owners recovered their property by invoking the assistance of the Court.

The case of Potiki taua, one of the great island names, is almost identical with those already mentioned, but it will be sufficient to say that the Court has reinstated Anautoa, who is a Makea of the elder branch of the family (Karika line).

As for the Arera people, who are said to be the real Makeas, they have been scattered and driven from their lands, and many of them do not now know who they are. I notice, however, that certain influential men who are themselves Areras are moving in the matter, and I anticipate that further tales of injustice and cruelty will be placed on the record. The family known as the Vakatini have been foremost in this system of spoliation, and chief among them was the late Judge Te Pou. His son Jimmy Te Pou now holds the land of the Areras, but the Court only awarded him a life interest therein. At that time the people were either unwilling or afraid to give evidence against the leading people, and they had good reason to be afraid, for they did not