

1. *Additional Medical Assistance.*

Steps are being taken to secure the services of a permanent Assistant Medical Officer. There is plenty of useful work for two medical men, and their duties will be increased largely when legislation now in contemplation to deal effectively with venereal diseases comes into force. The visitation of the outlying islands is very important, but flying visits for the time that the steamer remains are of little use. Owing to the limited means of communication between the various islands, it is difficult to arrange for regular visits by a medical man; but, as soon as the new Assistant Medical Officer takes up his duties, no effort will be spared to give proper attention to the health question in all the islands of the group. The suggestion to place a medical man on each island is impracticable, firstly on account of the expense, and secondly because medical men will not exile themselves to these remote places while there are so many chances of advancement in civilized regions.

2. *The Appointment of a Judge of the Native Land Court.*

I recommend that a Judge of the New Zealand Native Land Court be lent to the Cook Islands Administration for twelve months or two years for the purpose of clearing up the business of the Native Land Titles Court. I was informed that many of the Natives are anxious to have their relative interests in the various blocks defined as early as possible. As you are aware, I am now endeavouring to arrange for the services of a Judge to undertake this duty.

3. *Education.*

Prior to my visit to Rarotonga, I was of opinion that the education afforded by the Mission schools was adequate to the requirements of the Natives. I have changed my opinion in this respect, as it is quite evident that a change must be made. For a long while past the London Missionary Society has been anxious to rid itself of the work of education, and I anticipate no difficulty in making reasonable arrangements for the gradual transfer of the schools to the local Administration. I propose that a commencement should be made by the establishment of a village school at Avarua, where I was told there would be an attendance of a hundred to a hundred and fifty children. The instruction given should be largely industrial. The Natives seemed to me to be a handy lot, and capable of great development along industrial lines. I intend to consult with the Education Department, and to submit definite proposals to you later on. The Natives themselves are very anxious to have schools. At every meeting we had with them, and also in conversation, their chief cry was "Give us schools. You are enlightened people. Teach us to become enlightened also." When the first school has been started at Avarua, other schools should be opened in the other villages as circumstances will permit, and the system can gradually be extended to the other islands of the group. I have no doubt that the Parliament of New Zealand will afford whatever financial assistance may be necessary.

4. *Improved Steamer Services.*

An improvement in the steamer services is highly necessary. The history of the development of the fruit trade is the history of a continuous struggle against adverse conditions caused by inadequate means of transport by sea. The opening of the southern service to Wellington was a great boon, but much still remains to be done. There is great complaint in the Islands as to the unsuitable class of boat employed in this trade, and the inconvenience of the service as at present arranged. The Union Steamship Company, has, however, purchased a steamer to run in this line, and it is to be hoped that improved conditions will result.

Complaints against Administration.

The complaints made against the local Administration are so fully dealt with in the report of His Honour the Chief Justice, which has been presented to Parliament, that it is not necessary to refer to them in detail. The conditions prevailing in the Cook Islands are not unusual in countries in which a settled government supersedes the rule of Native chiefs and the missionaries. The early history of New Zealand presents similar features. The Government of the Cook Islands is in a state of transition; the rule of the Native chiefs and the missionaries has passed away, but they still cling to the shadow of the influence they once possessed. On the other hand, the new system of government has not yet settled itself upon a stable basis, and has not the resources of civilization at its back. Every step taken must be tentative. The Government has to reconcile the conflicting interests of the European and the Native in the best way it can. Time and patience alone will solve these difficulties, but they are not rendered more easy of solution by their removal into the domain of politics. New Zealand has undertaken certain responsibilities in connection with the Cook Group. Among these responsibilities is the recognition of the right to self-government, with the assistance of European administrators. The system has worked as well as might have been expected. The Natives made no complaint against the Administration, but, on the contrary, expressed their satisfaction with it. So far as I could see, the complaints from Europeans were based more on personal than on public grounds. I am satisfied that the local Administration desires to govern the Islands with proper regard to the interests of all classes of the community; but in the practical work of administration it is impossible, even if it were desirable, to please every one. The finances of the Group are on a sound basis; taxation is light; and the export trade has increased by £55,000 in nine years. The conditions of life are easy; there is no poverty in the sense that European communities understand the term; and the census returns show that the population is not decreasing. Under these circumstances, I see no reason to fear for the future of the Group.

I take this opportunity of expressing my great appreciation of the kindness and hospitality extended to me during my visit to Rarotonga.

F. WALDEGRAVE.