

On the death of Makea Apera, the previous Ariki, who was an uncle of the late Makea (Takau was at Atiu at the time with her late husband, Ngamaru Ariki of Atiu), the Arikis and chiefs of Rarotonga sent a vessel to Atiu to bring Takau to Rarotonga to be installed as Makea-Nui, as she was by birth the right one to succeed to that title. As soon as the vessel arrived from Atiu Takau was brought ashore and the ceremony of installation performed.

Some years after her installation a mass meeting was held by all the Arikis and chiefs of Rarotonga, and at that meeting it was unanimously decided to ask for a British protectorate, and Makea was selected to act for them and to use her best endeavours to obtain the protectorate. Thus, through her efforts, a British protectorate was declared over the Cook Group during the month of October, 1888, the British warship "Hyacinth" being sent for that purpose. The reasons why a British protectorate was so much desired were clearly set out at the time.

After the late Mr. Frederick J. Moss had been appointed British Resident he used his best endeavours to bring about a federation of the Group, with the result that on the 4th June, 1891, delegates from all the Cook Islands met at Avarua, Rarotonga, to form a Federal Parliament of the Cook Islands, when Mr. Moss addressed the assembled people. The Federal Parliament was constituted, and the first law (Law No. 1, "A Law to provide for the Good Government of the Cook Islands") was discussed, and sections 1 and 6 were passed that day.

On the 5th June, 1891, the Arikis—Mere Pa Ariki, Kainuku Ariki, Makea Karika Tavake Ariki, and Tinomana Mereana Ariki—reported to the Parliament that after much discussion they had decided to elect Makea Takau to be Chief of the Federal Government, which was approved of by the members and the British Resident, and the name of Makea Takau was inserted in clause 13 of Law No. 1 and passed. Thus Takau came to hold a high and responsible position among her people.

In the year 1900, when the question of annexation to the British Empire was brought up, Makea Takau took a prominent part, and she, strongly supported by Pa Maretu Ariki, a man of high ability and advanced ideas, also by Makea Karika Tavake, Kainuku Ariki, and Tinomana Mereana Ariki, met the chiefs of the island, together with Ngamaru Ariki of Atiu, who also represented Mauke and Mitiaro. At this meeting the question was gone into, with the result that on the 6th September, 1900, a petition was drawn up and signed by the late Makea and her fellow Arikis and chiefs, to be forwarded to His Excellency the Governor of New Zealand, asking that the islands represented by the signatories be annexed to the British Empire. The petition was forwarded through the British Resident, Lieut.-Colonel W. E. Gudgeon, C.M.G. As a result of this representation, His Excellency arrived at these Islands on board H.M.S. "Mildura" on the 8th October, 1900, and performed the ceremony of annexation.

The late Makea Takau Ariki was a woman of great ability and of a most kindly disposition, and well suited to hold the high position her countrymen elected her to. During the time that I have administered the Cook Islands I have been loyally supported by the late Makea Ariki, and her loss will be severely felt by the Administration.

Visit to the Northern Islands.

In my despatch No. V1/1910/540, of the 23rd September, 1910, I advised you of my return from a visit to the Northern Islands in the London Missionary Society's steamer "John Williams." I am pleased to inform you that since that date everything in the Northern Group has been quite satisfactory. The last reports received by me from the Resident Agent of Manihiki and Rakahanga are very gratifying, in so far as my visit seems to have had the effect of making the Natives more contented and peaceable. I need not further touch upon this matter.

On my visit I found that there was no such thing as a water-supply, none of the Northern Islands possessing high lands of any description, the highest point above sea-level being at the outside 20 ft. to 30 ft. They simply consist of sand and coconut-palms, nature providing for their protection from the ocean by means of coral reefs a long distance out, which break the force of the water, otherwise the islands would be destroyed by the action of the ocean. The Northern Islands produce nothing except coconuts and taro. Bananas, pineapples, and oranges will not grow there, but fortunately they are well provided with an unlimited supply of very excellent fish. It was found that the few wells existing on each island only contained brackish water, it being obvious that fresh water could not be procured on such sand-dunes. A vote has been taken on this year's estimates to provide the whole of the Northern Islands with fresh-water tanks to be erected of reinforced concrete, each tank to hold 5,000 gallons. By this time the cement and materials have reached such islands, but it will be some time yet before all the tanks can be erected owing to the sparsity of communication between the islands. Permission has been granted by the London Missionary Society to utilize church buildings as catchment-areas. The tanks will be entirely under the supervision of the Resident Agents on each island, certain hours being set apart for serving the water out. The water will not be allowed to be used for washing purposes. This has been strictly laid down by instructions issued to the Resident Agents—the Polynesian is so careless that if he were allowed free use of the tanks he would forget to turn off the tap. The sum allocated for this work may not be adequate, but under the circumstances the Administration will not grudge more for such a work if found necessary.

Labour.

The question of labour not only for plantation-work, but for Government and shipping purposes, is one causing some anxiety, owing to the prosperous condition of the Natives, they finding, under the improved conditions, their private plantation-work more payable than hitherto. It is now a very hard task to find sufficient labour for fumigation purposes to enable the ship to get away.