

Natives are now beginning to appreciate the fact that the back land, though not so good as the front, has a value, and are applying to have the ownership determined. Also, as previously stated, they are applying for partitions. I have already reported as to the work in the other "near" islands. There is, I am informed, a little work in the Northern Islands, which I have not been able to visit, and the Natives desire a Court, but it can scarcely be of great urgency. If a Judge is to be sent down next year he will probably be occupied three or four months with the work now in sight in the different islands, provided that proper provision is made for prior survey.

I have found that the system of survey and Court work proceeding at the same time was unsatisfactory to the Natives, who declared that they were prejudiced by it, and it is quite possible that cases might occur where they would be, though I took every precaution. It seems to me that Mr. Connal will have to be provided temporarily with an assistant surveyor if the work is to be gone on with. He cannot possibly carry out single-handed both public works and surveys in all the islands.

There are at present two appeals ripe for hearing, one from a decision of Lieut.-Colonel Gudgeon and one from a decision of my own. Two Judges are required to hear them. There is no urgency for hearing, and I will be prepared, with your approval, to make a suggestion in that direction later on. Though I understand the new Resident Commissioner is not to undertake Land Court work, it will be necessary, I think, to appoint him a Judge of the Land Titles Court so as to have some one to deal with formal urgent matters. It would, I consider, be an advantage to have a provision added to the Order in Council establishing the Land Titles Court of a similar nature to the "assembled owners" provisions in the Native Land Act, 1909, of New Zealand. It would much facilitate future leases. Owners are usually numerous in proportion to the size of the holdings, and to obtain all their signatures is sometimes impracticable and always difficult. I cannot at present think of any other points in connection with this subject to which I can usefully direct your attention.

EDUCATION.

This is a subject on which I think you should obtain a report by an expert, as if the Government is to undertake the education of the children of all these islands it will be a very costly undertaking, and every care should be taken at the outset to establish a system on the best lines. Only an expert can do this.

As you know, the educational work has been almost entirely carried on by the London Missionary Society. There are, however, two Catholic schools—one in Rarotonga and one in Aitutaki—conducted by nuns belonging to a French order. The Mother Superior in each case is a Frenchwoman, but the other nuns are Irish or British. English is taught in these schools, which appear well conducted. They are at present the only facilities for the education of white children. There are also Catholic day schools conducted by French priests at Atiu, Mauke, and, I believe, Manihiki. I know very little about these. The Tereora School, at Rarotonga, which was conducted by the London Missionary Society as a boarding-school, and intended for children of other islands as well as Rarotonga, has been closed for some two years. It was, I am informed, a well-conducted school. English was taught, and the children, for a time at all events, were removed from bad influences and placed under good. There was, I am told, great difficulty in getting the Natives to pay even the very moderate amount charged for the keep and teaching of their children. There has been no representative of the London Missionary Society in the Group for several months, owing to the long illness and lamented death of the Rev. J. J. K. Hutchin, for thirty years missionary here. Hence I have been unable to discuss anything connected with the London Mission schools. But I believe there is no intention to reopen Tereora.

At Aitutaki there is the Araura School, formerly conducted by a white teacher engaged by the London Missionary Society, but recently by a Native teacher and wife, Mr. and Mrs. Tiavare Enare, both old students of the school. I stayed at this school when at Aitutaki. The school is conducted as a boarding-school. There were about eighty children—as many as the school can accommodate. The children appeared well cared-for and happy. Both teachers speak excellent English, and teach it to the children. The girls sew very well indeed. Altogether the school appeared to me a very good one, but I cannot judge of the scholastic results. The Island Council take an interest in the school, and the elders take it in turn to stay at it in order to assist the teachers in the care of the children. The Council claims that the school belongs to the island and not to the London Missionary Society; that the island gave the land and built the school without any expense to the society. But the latter undoubtedly established the school, and the land has been vested in it for school purposes. There again, however, the parents are lax in meeting the charges for their children's education, and it is doubtful whether the school can carry on. The teacher's salary is greatly in arrear, and though devoted to his work he cannot live on air. Formerly the London Missionary Society contributed £40 annually towards the teacher's salary, but have not done so to the present man. Cook Islands Administration used to give £50 annually, but two years ago that was discontinued. I have not been able to find a record showing why, but I have been informed that the Rev. Mr. Hall, of the London Missionary Society, objected to its payment. Tiavare Enare told me Mr. Hall ordered him not to take money from Government. I am at a loss to understand why. Mr. Hall left some time ago. I was pressed to renew the subsidy and promised to confer with Mr. Hutchin, but his illness and death prevented that being done. I decidedly think the school should be assisted pending any general scheme of education by Government. I would have done it myself but for my reluctance to do what might appear an interference with the society's arrangements, however well meant such interference might be.

The London Missionary Society has quite a number of day schools taught by Native teachers, except the one here at Avarua, where the missionary himself teaches, assisted by his wife and the