

Native mission teachers or students. There are five day schools altogether in Rarotonga in the different settlements, three in Mangaia, three in Aitutaki, and one in each of the other islands, including the Northern Islands. I am unable to express an opinion as to their value, but they are certainly better than nothing. Except to a certain extent at the Avarua School, no attempt is made to teach English—in fact, the teachers themselves have only a very limited knowledge of that language. This largely detracts from the usefulness of the schools. Unless a Native can speak or at least read English his opportunities for self-advancement are necessarily limited, and he competes on very unequal terms with the world as it is now rapidly opening out to him. The number of books printed in Maori is very small, and thus there is little chance of administering the “healthy mental stimulus” referred to by Mr. Moss.

I believe the Natives would readily listen to educative addresses or lectures were there any one to give them. I understand the London Missionary Society desires to be relieved of the burden of education of the children and that Government should undertake it, but I am not aware that the society intends to abandon any other part of its mission work in these islands. I apprehend that if Parliament votes money for education here, as must be done before any system can be inaugurated, it will impose a condition that the schools are to be secular or at least open to all denominations. Probably the London Missionary Society has foreseen this, but I should imagine they will make some attempt to ensure religious instruction being given.

As to their school properties, I have obtained a report from the Registrar of the Land Titles Court, which I append hereto. The society obviously hold the school-sites, other than Tereora leasehold, clothed with a trust, and are not entitled to sell or otherwise dispose of them, especially if it be true that the Natives put up the buildings. But the taking-over could no doubt be arranged without any great friction; if not, there is always the power to take land under section 20 of the Cook Islands Government Act, 1908. I am fairly confident the Natives will ask no compensation, as they all recognize the value of the schools, even though as individuals they may be lax in regard to their responsibilities towards their children.

Given the buildings, the next question would be obtaining competent teachers similar to those in the Native schools in New Zealand. The language would be an initial difficulty. Any one with a knowledge of New Zealand Maori would, however, soon speak the local dialect with fluency. At least two teachers would be needed here to begin with, and one at each of the other near islands, except perhaps Mitiaro, where the total population is only about two hundred. They could get Native assistance. As to the Northern Islands, I have no personal knowledge of them. One man might perhaps be able to act as supervisor for Penrhyn, Rakahanga, and Manihiki, but communication is infrequent and uncertain. I do not think you will ever get a white man to go to Pukapuka, where there are a little over four hundred people in all. At Palmerston the population consists of the Marsters family—something over a hundred. Very stringent regulations would be needed to enforce regular attendance. The present Ordinance is insufficient (the School Attendance Ordinance, 1903—page 143 of the printed Book of Laws).

I regret that I can say no more on this very important subject, but, as I have already intimated, it seems to me that details would have to be worked out by an expert in education matters. I observe in the correspondence printed as addendum to Lieut.-Colonel Gudgeon's report of 1906 that Mr. Hogben appears to have suggested a scheme of education for these Islands, but I have not been able to find any record of the scheme here (*vide* parliamentary paper A.—3 at page 102). You will there also find Lieut.-Colonel Gudgeon's own views. No doubt the education given should be of a primary character, with some technical education, especially in regard to tropical agriculture.

I have now dealt with all the special matters referred to in your letter of instructions; but as you invite any further suggestions for the betterment of the Islands I will mention one or two things which seem of importance.

#### WATER-SUPPLY.

First and above all is the question of water-supply. It is *the* great requirement of the Islands. Not only is it of importance that there should be good drinking-water, but there is the question of cleanliness. It is, of course, the merest platitude to say that cleanliness means health, and dirt means disease. From my experience it seems to me that the people will avail themselves of water for cleanliness of their persons and clothing if it is easily available to them. Give them an opportunity everywhere to keep clean and it will save much in the health department. A great deal has already been done in this direction; much remains to be done. All the work that I would suggest is, I know, in contemplation when it is considered that funds will permit. The need of it is fully recognized. But what I want to urge on you is “do it now.” Do not wait to do it partly this year and partly next. Put it all in hand and complete it as speedily as possible. This administration has over £4,000 in credit. I do not call that a merit; I call it a sin while such urgent work remains undone. I urge you to spend it all on water if necessary, but I am sure nothing like that will be needed. Valuable work was done last year in the Northern Islands, which are entirely dependent on rain-water, by the construction of large concrete tanks. Boring for water is proceeding at Aitutaki with some success. Several concrete tanks have been constructed there; one or two more are needed. At Atiu the settlement is at the top of the island. Water is got in gullies lower down, probably contaminated. One or two concrete tanks would be a boon in dry seasons, and probably save much sickness. Water is very scarce in the Mauke settlements—two tanks at least are needed. Probably the same at Mitiaro, but I have no positive information. Several tanks are needed at Mangaia. I am expecting a report from the Resident Agent. These tanks cost