

THE HIGH COURT AND THE NATIVE LAND COURT.

In the civil jurisdiction of the High Court fourteen cases of divorce were dealt with, there being practically no other business. 126 criminal cases were dealt with. Fees and fines amounted to £52 7s. The Niueans do not appear to be so fond of litigation as the Natives in some of the other islands.

As regards the Native Land Court, only one case has been heard and determined so far. In the absence of a surveyor, not much practical progress is possible.

MEDICAL AND HEALTH.

Attached will be found a report made by Dr. Barraclough, the Medical Officer, on the health of the people of the island. As regards the doctor's remarks about the hospital for Niue, I may say that I hope to recommend the acquirement of a piece of land situated on the high land above the Village of Alofi. The piece of land I refer to was recommended to me by Dr. Dawson, when that gentleman was Medical Officer here, as a very suitable site for a hospital. I have shown Dr. Barraclough the site referred to, and he has also approved of it, provided the land is of sufficient area—say, 5 to 6 acres. It is pre-eminently the most central and convenient place for a hospital, and the land has never been put to much use by the Native owner. If after a careful inspection it is found that sufficient area is available I will recommend that the land be compulsorily acquired under the Cook Islands Act. Even if it is not possible at the present time to find the necessary money for the erection and maintenance of a hospital, it will be a step in the right direction to have the site ready.

ESTIMATES FOR 1917-18.

I attach hereto my estimates of the expenditure for the current year. They have been put as low as possible, consistent with efficiency. You will observe that a sum of £300 is set apart for the maintenance of roads. That represents the expenditure of the estimated receipts under Local Ordinance No. 6.

If the land required for prison, police, and hospital purposes is acquired during this year I estimate the sum of £325 will be required for compensation to the owners of the land.

It is very difficult to frame an estimate of the probable revenue for the current year, as so much depends on the success or otherwise of the coconut crop. However, provided that everything goes along well, I estimate that the total revenue will amount to £2,800.

I have, &c.,

H. CORNWALL,

Resident Commissioner.

The Hon. Minister for the Cook Islands.

EXTRACTS FROM THE REPORT OF DR. HERBERT BARRACLOUGH, M.B., MEDICAL OFFICER, NIUE ISLAND.

Alofi, Niue, 2nd April, 1917.

I have the honour to present my report on the medical state of the Island of Niue during the nine months which have elapsed since my arrival here on the 30th June, 1916.

During this period there has been a very large amount of sickness on the island—more, I am assured on good authority, than there has been at any one time in the past thirty years. This has very considerably raised the numbers attended to at the dispensary and the visits paid to patients in their own homes. At the dispensary the number of consultations or of medicines issued reached the high total of 10,948, and there were in addition 2,554 visits paid. This latter figure includes all those seen and attended to during my periodical visits to the outlying villages. All the outside villages have been frequently visited, though, on account of the incidence of sickness, some have at different times received more of my attention than others. The largely increased sickness during the last three months of the year 1916 was mainly of a general character, though at one time it almost assumed the proportions of an outbreak of epidemic pneumonia. Also a large proportion of chronic cases swelled the mortality. In November, for instance, there were twenty deaths, not less than 75 per cent. being due to chronic diseases. The cause of this outbreak was undoubtedly the abnormally heavy rainfall—14·60 in. and 13·96 in. falling in November and December respectively. This, as is usual, badly affected the old people, 36 per cent. of the deaths during those two months being due to old age or diseases incident thereto.

Tuberculosis.—This fell disease, the white man's curse, seems likely to become the brown man's curse also. During the past nine months fourteen deaths occurred from this cause. Besides these there are many cases under treatment which are doing well, the disease having been detected at an early stage. This is always difficult to do, as the Niuean will not take the trouble to come and see the doctor until discomfort or pain compel him to do so. The problem of what is to be done to fight this terrible disease is beset with great difficulty. Vigorous measures will certainly have to be taken ere long to cope with the evil.

Malignant Disease.—This is slowly but surely laying its deadly grip upon the island, there having been five deaths from cancer and two from sarcoma during the past nine months. There are also three cases of cancer at present under observation.