

enforcing it; and this, we have the authority of the Rev. Mr. Chalmers for saying, could be absolutely and efficiently done if a competent European officer were appointed for the purpose; and he even went the length of naming a European resident in the Islands as well qualified for the task. It appears that Mr. Chalmers, in a letter enclosed by you, has modified his opinion so far as to say that such officer would require a staff. Then, let a staff be added. But we venture to suggest that there is no reason for this enlargement of Mr. Chalmers's proposal made to the Alliance. The work of the officer in question could not be very arduous. The amount of shipping resorting to the islands, according to Mr. Moss, is only seventy-one vessels in the year, barely three in a fortnight, and many of them, no doubt, very small, and all of which must, for want of other harbours, enter that of Rarotonga. It seems not unreasonable to believe that one competent man could superintend the whole business. At all events, it does seem that on the principle enunciated by His Excellency, as actuating Her Majesty's Government, some effort should have been made to give effect to a system under which Mr. Chalmers emphatically declared that the introduction of intoxicating liquors could be absolutely suppressed. That Mr. Moss made no such suggestion, but, after a very brief agitation, persuaded the native Council to abrogate the prohibitory law which had for twenty-five years been on their statute-book, and to inaugurate the unique licensing law devised by himself without first obtaining His Excellency's permission, when he had only been instructed to inquire into the subject, does seem to bear out our charge of undue haste and indiscretion. If Mr. Moss had spent a year in maturing some system for the maintenance of the prohibitory law which he found established, but not carried out, it would certainly have been better than the course he has pursued. As it is, he has by his precipitance missed an opportunity which may never occur again.

Another feature of Mr. Moss's proceedings, on which we feel obliged to remark, is the importance which he attaches to the Europeans in the islands, and which induced him to invite some of them to the discussions where they had no constitutional right to be, and apparently conferred upon them the privilege of voting; and we are rather surprised to learn from Mr. Chalmers's letter enclosed by you, that he considers that it would be an uncalled-for hardship on such white traders to prohibit their having what they required for their own use. Mr. Chalmers informed the Alliance that there were only forty Europeans and fifteen Chinese in the whole group of islands (the latter all sly grog-sellers) among a total population of about six thousand aborigines. Many of these are no doubt of a class, well known to all residents in the Pacific, who frequent the beaches of the various islands, and have no stake in the country which should entitle them to a voice in the making of its laws. It is quite certain that the conferring of special privileges on these persons would defeat, to a great extent, any attempt to promote the sobriety of the natives.

The practical point, however, which the Alliance desires to press on the Government of New Zealand, is that, assuming that Mr. Chalmers's assertion is true (and Mr. Moss has nothing to contradict it), that the prohibitory law hitherto in existence could be effectually enforced by the appointment of an inspector, and that the natives are scarcely prepared to tax themselves for the salary of such an officer, could not the colonial Government, whose officer the Resident practically is, and whose salary is paid by it, contribute the moderate sum which might be necessary to secure the services of such an official with or without a staff. It is presumed that, in authorising the appointment of a Resident, the British Government understood that it assumed a considerable amount of responsibility, which it has virtually devolved on the colonial Government. Is it too much to suggest that the latter should not only undertake the responsibility of nominating the Resident and paying the salary of his office, but should appropriate at least in part such an amount of revenue as may enable effect to be given to the principle which His Excellency has referred to as always guiding the Imperial Government—that of maintaining prohibitory laws?

In conclusion, I may inform you that the interference of the New Zealand Alliance has not been an impertinence on its part. It has been the result of a correspondence originated by Queen Makea, of Rarotonga, imploring our interference to prevent the exportation of strong drink from our shores to the ruin of her people. That much of it is conveyed to Rarotonga by New Zealand vessels, and landed in defiance or evasion of the prohibitory law, and if continued will for the future supply the legitimate demand for it, under Mr. Moss's licensing law, imposes a responsibility on the colony which it cannot evade. It might have been possible, while prohibition existed in Rarotonga, for the General Government of New Zealand to take steps to prevent the exportation of liquors by ships leaving its ports, but, under Mr. Moss's system, no excuse could be made for such interference. The trade is no longer a contraband one, but authorised by the law of Rarotonga under Mr. Moss's arrangements, and it may be safely predicted that, in spite of all attempts to limit its consumption to persons licensed to drink by the Queen, or by the officer in charge, all that is sent from this colony, or anywhere else, will find a ready market.

As your letter under acknowledgment was written by His Excellency's command, I shall be obliged if you will communicate this to him.

Yours, &c.

WILLIAM FOX,

President of the New Zealand Alliance for the
Suppression of the Liquor-traffic.

The Hon. J. Ballance, Premier, &c.

No. 2.

Mr. A. WILLIS to Sir W. Fox, Auckland.

SIR,—

Premier's Office, Wellington, 14th March, 1891.

I am directed, by the Hon. the Premier, to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 5th instant, which, in accordance with your request, has been forwarded to His Excellency the Governor.

I have, &c.,

ALEX. WILLIS.

Sir W. Fox, K.C.M.G., President, New Zealand Alliance, Auckland.