

have to thank you, the Governor of New Zealand, for sending so great a man to us. You can rely on the good-will of the inhabitants of the Cook Islands to support him in carrying out good laws, as becomes loyal subjects of Her Majesty Queen Victoria. Enough.

From MAKEA, Ariki,
Chief of the Cook Islands Federal Government.

No. 17.

Lieut.-Colonel GUDGEON to His Excellency the GOVERNOR.

MY LORD,—

Cook Islands: Rarotonga, 14th September, 1898.

I have the honour to inform you that I arrived at Rarotonga on the 10th instant, and was duly installed as British Resident on the 12th.

I have already met the Head of the Government—viz., Makea—and her Arikis, and I think I may say that the Federal Court Bill will be passed when the local Parliament meets, about the end of the present month.

So far as I can ascertain, the Proclamation read out by Captain Browne, of Her Majesty's ship "Tauranga," has had an excellent effect on the Arikis and chiefs of the group; but at the same time they are rather sore on the subject of the Federal Court Bill, and I hear that it is the intention of the local Government to present me with a memorandum on the subject, in order to show that they are not entirely to blame for the delay in passing this very necessary legislation.

I cannot at present speak authoritatively on any subject connected with the Cook Islands, but I do not anticipate that I shall find any difficulty in dealing with the people or the group.

I may mention, for your Lordship's information, that I find that I can communicate with Makea and others without the aid of an interpreter.

I have, &c.,

W. E. GUDGEON,

British Resident.

His Excellency the Governor of New Zealand.

No. 18.

Lieut.-Colonel GUDGEON to His Excellency the GOVERNOR.

MY LORD,—

The Residency, Rarotonga, 19th September, 1898.

I have the honour to forward, for your consideration, the translation of a letter received from the leading chief of Mangaia, who protests against the imposition of a fine of £205, which it would seem was imposed by the late Resident, and apportioned among the various Arikis and Islands of the Cook Group, the award as against Mangaia being £27 10s.

I am informed that the question of the propriety of the fine has been referred to your Excellency by Mr. Moss, and the Proclamation published both in the *Torea* and in the *Ioi Karanga* newspapers disclose that the fine is made subject to your approval. I will therefore remark upon the circumstances that would seem to have brought about this exercise of authority.

I gather that some years ago the Federal Government of the Cook Islands found it necessary to purchase a printing-press, and that Mr. Moss placed it in the hands of one Henry Nicholas. The curious part of the affair is that the Arikis and members of Parliament do not seem to have realised that they owned the press until that fact transpired during the investigation held by Sir James Prendergast. When, however, the Maori chiefs realised that they were being reviled by their own printing press, they endeavoured to obtain possession of that which they had reason to believe was their own property. Why they were unable to obtain it peacefully I am unable to say; but the whole difficulty was probably due to the fact that the Resident was at the time on bad terms with the chiefs of the tribes and with certain of the influential Europeans, and therefore neither party could approach the other with a view to temperate discussion. Whatever the reason may have been, it is clear that one Oscar Owen, in company with several Maoris, and instigated thereto by Te Pou (a native Judge, since dead), did forcibly enter the premises of Henry Nicholas and remove the printing-press, and for this offence Mr. Owen has been punished in the High Commissioner's Court.

That the Arikis of the group may have taken part in this lawless act as accessories before the fact is possible, for it is difficult to persuade even educated Europeans that they have no right to rescue their own property by force when in the peaceable possession of others. But, so far as I can ascertain, there is no evidence to show that the people of Mangaia were implicated.

There are two matters to which I would draw your Excellency's attention: Firstly, that the fine has been made payable to Mr. Nicholas. This is, to say the least, a new departure. If the people of the Cook Islands are to be punished for an offence against the public, then the fine should be paid into the Treasury. If, on the other hand, Mr. Nicholas has suffered damage by reason of the high-handed proceedings of Judge Te Pou and his myrmidons, then there should be definite evidence as to the damage suffered, and the amount required to liquidate the same. At present it would seem that evidence is wanting on these points, and therefore it is doubtful whether Mr. Nicholas has suffered any damage. Secondly, I would point out, for your Excellency's consideration, that this fine was imposed after Mr. Moss had resigned his position as Resident, at a period when profound irritation existed between the majority of the inhabitants of the Cook Islands (European and Maori) and Mr. Moss's party, and for this reason the fine is simply regarded as vindictive by those who opposed Mr. Moss.

With regard to that portion of the fine referred to in the attached letter of John Trego (Ariki), I have the honour to recommend that it be absolutely remitted.

I have, &c.,

W. E. GUDGEON,

British Resident.

His Excellency the Governor of New Zealand.