

tribute. He would then set up his *rahui*, and either drive the man off or compel him to acknowledge the overlordship." Tararo then added that I need have no fear now, that the people understood their own interests, and would plant now that they had the law to protect them.

Mauke and Atiu are islands very suitable to the growth of oranges, and as yet are unaffected by the blights and insect-pests of Rarotonga. Moreover, the trees are for the most part young, and the fruit of superior quality, but it is seldom that more than half of it reaches New Zealand. During the orange season, when the steamer is really wanted at each and every island, it is found that she cannot do the work required. The result is that some islands must suffer, and Atiu and Mauke are neglected.

The Atiu people suffer from the fact that they have not made any progress towards civilisation during the last forty years. They are still savages, and the Arikis are supreme. In the case of Mauke I had a sound excuse for ordering that all the lands should be surveyed, for the people of that island were always quarrelling; but in Atiu the chiefs and Arikis govern with a strong hand, and if there be quarrels they are hidden from me. The people are used to submission; and even though I may induce the chiefs to have the tribal boundaries surveyed, it will be of little benefit to the lower ranks of the people, in whose fortunes I am most concerned. For these reasons I do not expect any immediate improvement in the conditions of life at Atiu, though the island is large and fertile. The people are apt to be both childish and sulky, and believe that they can arbitrarily fix the price of island produce. Last year they were at least 50 tons short of the usual supply of copra. They simply refused to use the nuts they had because the high prices of the early part of the season were not maintained, and by some process of reasoning, entirely their own, they considered that they had been injured by this fact—indeed, that it was the result of some combination against them.

With such a people argument is impossible, for they are not open to instruction; but time will work wonders, and Rarotonga will be the object-lesson. The prosperity of this last-named island is so obvious that the other islands are inquiring into the cause thereof, and already the Atiuans have formed companies to work and plant their land—a very satisfactory arrangement, for it is in keeping with their old customs.

#### *Aitutaki.*

As to this island, but little need be said; it is satisfactory in every sense. The people are free, bold, and democratic in their bearing, and the Arikis have long since lost all power. The island is small but very fertile, and the production of copra is the chief industry. There will never be a large export of bananas from this island, by reason of the very dry winter season, but in the matter of copra it is easily first in the group, and the oranges are second only to those of Atiu and Mauke. In this island the people have few wants, and know how to help themselves; they are, moreover, under the direction of a very able Resident Agent, Mr. J. C. Cameron.

#### THE HEALTH OF THE ISLANDS.

The Polynesian of all men has the least possible hold on life, and his capacity for dying under the smallest provocation has been noted by the missionaries as a race-characteristic from the earliest times. Other races of men have perhaps decreased in a similar manner, but in those cases definite and understandable causes may be assigned for the decrease, such as repeated epidemics of small-pox or other dangerous disease; but for the decrease of the Polynesian no such reasons can be assigned, for the worst that he has had to meet has been an epidemic of measles.

The Rev. John Williams tells us that in 1823 the population of the Cook Group was about 14,000. At the present day, including strangers, it is only 6,700. In 1843 the Rev. W. Gill describes the position with more detail, and says that in that year there were 10,250 people in the group, of whom 3,600 adults and 4,300 children attended the Mission schools. In the year 1827 the Mission estimated the population of Rarotonga at 6,000. In 1843 it had fallen to 3,300, and in that year there were 435 deaths to 100 births. This decrease in the population has gone on steadily, so that at the present time the Native-born Rarotongans do not exceed 1,550 of all ages and sexes. It is only within the last twelve years that this appalling death-rate has in a measure been arrested, and brought within moderate bounds; but the deaths are still liable to exceed the births, and the year 1907 is the worst that we have experienced for some time.

The following are the vital statistics that I have been able to obtain. Mauke and Mitiaro, although warned, have not sent in the returns required:—

Name of Island.	Births.	Deaths.	Marriages.	Population.
Rarotonga .. .. .	83	89	41	2,441
Aitutaki .. .. .	46	42	16	1,162
Mangaia .. .. .	62	62	22	1,531
Penrhyn .. .. .	11	23	5	420
Manihiki .. .. .	8	15	2	521
Rakahanga .. .. .	8	8	4	352
Atiu .. .. .	25	48	11	918
Total .. .. .	243	287	101	7,345