

On the 3rd February Dr. Dawson sent another letter :—

“ SIR,—

“ I shall be obliged if you will ascertain and inform me whether the acting Medical Officer will admit to the Hospital for treatment a case of cancer of the breast for immediate operation; a case of suppurating appendicitis, and a case of ischiorectal abscess. The patients are Natives. Discourtesy on the part of the Chief Medical Officer compels me to deal through you in this matter.

“ I am, &c.,

“ The Resident Commissioner, Rarotonga.”

“ Teotue, 3rd February, 1911.  
“ C. M. DAWSON, M.B., C.M.

This letter was received by the Resident Commissioner on the afternoon of the 3rd, and the next day he indorsed thereon a memo. to Dr. Story as follows :—

“ I enclose for your information a letter received yesterday afternoon from Dr. Dawson. Will you kindly enable me to reply.—I have, &c., J. EMAN SMITH, Resident Commissioner.—4th February, 1911.”

Dr. Story replied on the 6th as follows :—

“ DEAR SIR,—

“ In reply to your letter of the 4th instant I have to inform you that I only consented to temporarily act for Dr. Chesson during his absence. The cases referred to in Dr. Dawson's letter I think had better be left for the Chief Medical Officer to deal with on his return.

“ Yours faithfully,

“ Captain J. Eman Smith, Resident Commissioner, Rarotonga.”

“ A. C. STORY.

On the 8th the Resident Commissioner wrote to Dr. Dawson as follows :—

“ SIR,—

“ I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 3rd instant asking me if the acting Medical Officer will admit to the Hospital certain patients mentioned by you which I understand you are attending. I have referred the correspondence to Dr. Story. He states he thinks the question had better be left over for the Chief Medical Officer to deal with on his return, and I agree with him. Of course, you understand that Dr. Story only consented to act temporarily for Dr. Chesson whilst on sick-leave. For your information I may say that I expect Dr. Chesson on the 16th inst.

“ I have, &c.,

“ J. EMAN SMITH,

“ Dr. C. M. Dawson, M.B., C.M., Rarotonga.”

“ Resident Commissioner.

No reply was made to this until the 27th February, when Dr. Dawson wrote again. Dr. Story wrote on the 28th—next day. No reply seems to have been sent to Dr. Dawson, and on the 14th March he again wrote to the Resident Commissioner, and the Resident Commissioner replied on the 14th stating that he had handed the correspondence to Dr. Chesson on his arrival, and that was why he had not communicated with Dr. Dawson.

I must now comment on this correspondence. It will be observed that Dr. Dawson asked a question in his letter of the 31st January—namely, whether the Commissioner would inform him if the Hospital was ready to receive patients for surgical treatment, and, if not, when it would be. On the next day, the 1st February, the reply sent was that so far as the Commissioner was aware the Hospital was ready to receive patients for surgical treatment, and that if the patient were a Native he would be attended to free of charge by Dr. Story, and if he were a European there was no objection to Dr. Dawson using the Hospital for such patient pending the return of the Chief Medical Officer. I think any one reading the correspondence would have a right to ask why Dr. Dawson communicated with the Resident Commissioner at all. He was living only a few minutes' walk from the Hospital; Dr. Story was in charge: why did he not call and ask Dr. Story and see the Hospital for himself? The reason that he gives for communicating with the Resident Commissioner seems to be most absurd. This reason appears in his letter of the 3rd February, 1911, and was as follows: “ Discourtesy on the part of the Chief Medical Officer compels me to deal through you in this matter.” Now, he knew that the Chief Medical Officer was not in Rarotonga. Why, then, did he write to the Commissioner? He does not say he had quarrelled with Dr. Story, and he gives no reason in his correspondence why he did not accept the offer that was tendered to him of the use of the Hospital. He could have ascertained for himself whether the Hospital was suitable for the treatment of the cases he said he had. Why did he not do so? Surely, if human life were at stake it was the duty of a medical man to ignore any discourtesy with which he might have been treated by an absent medical man, and to have gone to the Hospital himself and availed himself of the offer made to him by Dr. Story and the Commissioner. But that is not all. At the time that the Commissioner received this letter of the 3rd February the man who was said to be suffering from ischiorectal abscess was in fact dead. He died in the morning or forenoon of the 3rd February (see letters marked “ H,” “ I,” and “ J ”). Dr. Dawson says he was not aware of his death until the afternoon; but when he became aware of his death, why did he not