

I append the report of the Chief Medical and Health Officer :—

“ SIR,—

“ Rarotonga, 2nd April, 1912.

“ I have the honour to report that since the date of my appointment the health of the people on the Island of Rarotonga has been on the whole satisfactory. There has been no form of epidemic disease, unless one includes the various manifestations of syphilis. There have been very few cases of this disease in the primary form, but many hereditary and other advanced cases. The problem of fighting it is a difficult one.

“ The Hospital has been opened for in-patients during the year, and that it has filled a long-felt want is shown by the fact that there have been fifty-three inmates. The number of deaths was two. Most of the cases are from the Island of Rarotonga.

“ The appointment of Dr. Maclurkin as Assistant Medical Officer enabled me to leave Rarotonga for the purpose of paying flying visits to the Islands of Aitutaki, Atiu, and Mangaia, and in the extremely short time at my disposal at these islands I found many cases which would benefit by hospital treatment. The difficulty is that with our present insufficient means of communication it is impossible to bring such cases into the Hospital, and even if we could do so we could give no guarantee as to when the cases could be returned to their homes. The Union Company's steamers only call where there is a likelihood of cargo, and the locally-owned schooners cannot be depended upon in any way. The steamer service is a monthly one, and is practically useless owing to the fact that it means travelling *via* Tahiti and also a compulsory stop of four weeks on any one island, in addition to which it is only a partial service, as for some months of the year the steamer calls at the Island of Mangaia only.

“ The Northern Islands have not been visited since last September, and there is no chance of visiting them until next September, when I hope to be permitted to proceed there on the London Missionary Society's steamer 'John Williams.' This will be better than no visit at all, but as I shall be a passenger I shall have to leave when they want me to, whether my work is finished or not.

“ Under the circumstances I am left no option but to ask you to make arrangements for a vessel of our own, for this is the only way by which proper attention can be given in the outlying islands to the health of the people. I am of opinion that each island should be visited at least every three months, and until we have had an opportunity of getting acquainted with their requirements a stay of three weeks on some of the islands would be necessary.

“ Another most vital point which has to be considered is that of leprosy. How many cases there are scattered about I do not know, nor does any one else, for prior to the appointment of an assistant Medical Officer the cursory inspection now given to the islands was not even possible. During my next trip I hope to be able to make more satisfactory arrangements for the care of any lepers I may find, and I also desire to select a suitable island, which should be easily accessible from Rarotonga, where all the lepers in the Group could be isolated together. When a selection has been made we are, however, faced with the problem of conveying the lepers there. This can only be done with our own vessel.

“ An important reason for the necessity of putting our islands in a state of health is the opening in the near future of the Panama Canal. I have been in communication with the authorities of the Canal zone, and they have told me what measures they intend to take to prevent as far as possible yellow fever getting past them; these measures, however, may not always be successful. I am aware that the mosquito which is suspected of conveying yellow fever exists in our islands, and measures must be taken for the destruction of these mosquitoes before there is any chance of the fever reaching us.

“ The point I wish to drive home is that there is work to be done; the Natives are in a state such as must end in their extinction if nothing is done. I believe they can be made healthy, and I desire to do what I can to preserve what I believe to be a race worth preserving. So far you have given me what I have asked for. I am now making a big request, and I trust that you will be able to arrange it, and that something may be done during this year to provide a vessel of our own, without which the difficulties of giving proper attention to the health of our people are insurmountable.

“ With regard to the Hospital, I may say that what was called a hospital existed here for some years, but there was next to no provision made for in-patients. The present building is adequate for present requirements, as twelve patients can be accommodated in the main building and two or three in a Burro annexe. If, however, we are to be allowed to work the other islands as they ought to be worked an extension will have to be provided for.

“ During the year supplies of medicines have been sent to the various islands as opportunity offered.

“ I have, &c.,

“ The Resident Commissioner, Rarotonga.

“ G. PEARCE BALDWIN.”

AUDIT.

The accounts of the Administration were again audited by Mr. A. G. Clarke, of the Postal Department of New Zealand, and I attach a copy of his report for your information.

GENERAL.

Education.

The question of the education of the Natives should receive your serious consideration. Both sides of the House are, I understand, agreed upon this, and a promise was made on behalf of the then Government by the late Under-Secretary for Justice, when in Rarotonga a short time ago, that the Government would take over the education of the people. At the present time the education (if it can be called such) given to Native children is mainly in the hands of the London Missionary Society, now about to vacate the Islands. Only in one of the Society's schools can English be said to be taught,