

who accompanied me to the so-called 'Residency,' which I found in a most dilapidated state, both inside and out—filthy to a degree—quite unfit for human habitation. . . . I respectfully suggest the Administration build a new Residency at once, for the reason the Government property inside this fearful and rotten structure is at the mercy of wind and rain. . . . I should esteem it a favour to know definitely regarding this matter by the 'Talune,' otherwise you cannot expect me to remain." I could not say Mr. Russell's strictures were groundless, as our Engineer had reported that the structure was a very poor affair, so I ordered a new residence to be built at once, similar to those at Mauke and Aitutaki, and acquainted you of the fact. Atiu is recovering rapidly from the hurricane, and if the Natives are instructed how to prune the dead wood out of their orange-trees (I have no doubt they will be now, as Mr. Russell claims to be an expert on citrus-culture), their crops will be heavier than heretofore.

Mitiaro has recovered completely—there was not a trace of the hurricane—the people having returned to their normal state. They were very anxious that a doctor should visit them; but, as you know, that is impossible except at rare intervals. I visited the persons reported sick, and found they were those seen by Dr. Sheldon, of H.M.S. "Philomel," who had said they should be removed to a hospital, but doubted whether it would be of any avail.

As Mr. Ralfe was very desirous of going to New Zealand, owing to family illness, and the Mission steamer "John Williams" not returning to Rarotonga from the northern islands, but proceeding direct from Pukapuka to Samoa, involving a return via Fiji and New Zealand—so that if I went I should not be back before the 15th December, and Mr. Ralfe would be detained in Rarotonga until my return—I delegated him to take the northern trip in my stead. Further, I realized that this would be a saving in expense to the Administration, as Mr. Ralfe, having gone on leave, would pay his own passage back from New Zealand. Accordingly he left Rarotonga on the 23rd October last, and Aitutaki on the 24th, for Penrhyn, Rakahanga, Manihiki, and Pukapuka, taking with him from Aitutaki a large quantity of "puraka" which I had arranged with the Resident Agent at Aitutaki (Mr. Duncan) to send to the three last-named islands, as the sea during the hurricane had destroyed nearly the whole of theirs.

Mr. Ralfe held sittings of the High Court at each island visited, where required.

The Natives are very desirous that sittings of the Land Titles Court should be held to allocate their lands, and so save the endless disputes over coconuts that take place every year.

At Penrhyn and Pukapuka the rats are very destructive, and poison is to be sent to the Agents to see if they cannot be materially reduced in numbers, if not exterminated.

The people everywhere appeared contented and cheerful, and there was every indication of a plentiful supply of coconuts in the future.

PUKAPUKA.

On the arrival of the schooner "Huanui" at Pukapuka, on the 24th April, 1914, it was found that the three islands had been devastated by the hurricane on the 9th January. The sea had swept away most of the houses, leaving only seven. The wind, though not damaging the coconut-palms, had blown off nearly all the nuts, which had been washed away by the sea, besides some 40 tons of copra. The food patches had also been destroyed. Food was left to carry the islanders on until the "Huanui" could be sent back with more.

I had for some time contemplated placing a Resident Agent at Pukapuka to prevent the smuggling that was being carried on from Samoa and the Society Islands, and generally to look after the welfare of the Natives; so, on the 4th August, the "Huanui" was despatched with Mr. Dyer, the newly appointed Resident Agent, Mr. Brell, carpenter and builder, to build concrete tanks, a catch-water shed, and quarters for the Resident Agent, the material required for this work going at the same time, and also sufficient food to supply the Natives until their food-supplies came in. The "Huanui" was also to bring back as many Natives as she could carry who were willing to come to Rarotonga, to relieve the congestion. It was considered that this would probably help to develop the people, who from their extreme isolation are very primitive and helpless. The "Huanui" returned to Rarotonga on the 30th September last with fifty-two Natives, who were placed on the land acquired by the New Zealand Government for a wireless station, and are working about in different parts of Rarotonga. They are not good workmen, being stupid and lazy; possibly being here for a time may help to develop them.

I cannot speak too highly of Mr. Dyer's tact and management. The fact that in maintaining order, and influencing the Natives for their own good and the welfare of their islands, he has had the whole-hearted assistance of Ura, who had hitherto been virtually supreme, alone speaks volumes.

I propose placing Ura on the estimates for this next year as an Assessor, as asked by Mr. Dyer, whose reports you have.

EDUCATION.

Since my last report the New Zealand Government has provided the means for starting three schools at Rarotonga and one at Aitutaki.

The Araura School at Aitutaki, had hitherto been carried on as a boarding-school, by contributions of £1 per child per annum from the parents who could afford to pay, plus a certain amount of food; but, owing to the hurricane of last January, the people were no longer able to pay; and on the 14th October last Geoffrey Henry and his wife were about to close the school for want of funds. The children, to the number of ninety-five, are well taught in English, writing, and arithmetic, and the attendance would have been trebled if there had been adequate accommodation and parents could have afforded to send their children. It seemed to me that it would have been criminal on our part to allow the school to close, and the children drift away and lose what they had gained after what