

The Governor's Visit to the Cook Islands.

On Sunday last His Excellency the Governor, Lord Ranfurly, arrived in Auckland by H.M.S. Mildura from his visit to the Cook Islands. He appears to have enjoyed the trip greatly. The Mildura arrived off Rarotonga on the 16th of last month, and upon the vessel dropping anchor Colonel Gudgeon, the British Resident, proceeded on board to learn the wishes of His Excellency, and also to inform him what steps had been taken by the native and European settlers for his reception. It was arranged that the official landing would take place the next morning at ten o'clock. Strange to say, the weather, which for the past fortnight had been dirty and raining, cleared up with the vessel's arrival, and continued on its good behaviour during the few days that Lord Ranfurly spent there.

THE OFFICIAL RECEPTION.

Early on Monday morning the residents were out and about preparing for the coming ceremony. Prompt to the time stated His Excellency, accompanied by the commander of the ship, started for the shore, the man-o-war firing the usual salute as the Governor's boat was being pulled towards the landing place (the Union S.S. Co.'s wharf at Avarua). On his landing he was received by the British Resident, and after being introduced to some of the Arikis and principal chiefs present, the procession started for Makea Arikis' grounds, where the formal reception was to take place. The line of route was thronged with native men and women, all dressed in their best, the men mainly in white, while the fair (?) sex were decked out in almost every colour and shade procurable, in which flower wreaths were a prominent feature of their decorations. The native women have a passionate fondness for flowers, and none consider themselves fully dressed without floral wreaths forming a conspicuous part. Those who witnessed the Rarotongan contingent in the procession in Auckland will remember how they shone out on that 29th of January morning of 1890, the neat and graceful dressing of the people making them the observed of all observers. If so few made so great an impression, it can be imagined what a large concourse would have on a stranger's arrival here, and His Excellency and suite were astonished to see so many and so well and tastefully dressed natives.

His Excellency, on reaching Makea's residence, was duly received by that Arikis. A native speech of welcome being made to His Lordship from the steps of the palace Bretane (native for Britannia), Lord Ranfurly delivered the following address, which was listened to with marked attention by the large concourse of people assembled on the grounds:—

THE GOVERNOR'S SPEECH.

I thank the people of Rarotonga for the reception accorded to me to-day, and shall hope before departing to have an opportunity of expressing my views. It is a matter of much satisfaction to me that I have been able to meet the Arikis and Chiefs of Rarotonga and other islands of the Federation in their own country. Personally I regard it as one of the duties of my position to make myself acquainted with the circumstances of each island, whether permanently under the 'mana' of the British Crown or merely a protected State such as the federation of the Cook Islands. In either case I am convinced that it is not possible to settle any difficulty that may arise without the personal knowledge of the characters of the leading men and the requirements of their country, which can alone be obtained by seeing with one's own eyes and hearing with one's own ears. Furthermore it is a pleasure to me to visit these islands from which the ancestors of New Zealand Maoris migrated nearly five centuries ago, thereby establishing a record for daring and skill that has hardly been equalled by any feat of navigation

recorded in history. The interest I take in the Maori people of Polynesia is natural, for you must remember that I am Governor of the largest population of Maoris in the world, and therefore I have a natural desire to see for myself what manner of people they were who remained behind when the great migration sailed for New Zealand. My other reason is this, Her Majesty having assumed a protectorate over this group, I am anxious that the affairs of the federation should be conducted with as much wisdom and economy as can be reasonably expected from a people who have so lately adopted the European system of government, and if you are of opinion that my advice is likely to be of any value to you I shall be glad to confer with you on any point you may desire. I am informed that persons possibly maliciously disposed have spread reports to the effect that my visit to you was intended as preliminary to the annexation of the Cook Islands to the British Empire. I need hardly tell you that I have been much annoyed by this attempt to create distrust and illfeeling between I have the honour to represent and I the Maori people and the Sovereign therefore immediately authorised the British Resident to flatly contradict the report which I fear had its origin in the bad feeling which I am aware existed in the past, but which I had hoped to find extinct. In a small island like Rarotonga there is no room for malice and illfeeling, and those who seek to keep it alive are acting a very mean and criminal part. It should be the effort of Pakeha and Maori alike to work together and try to promote the welfare and trade both of your group of islands and your Government. It is my intention to visit Aitutaki, but time will not permit my visiting the other islands, for the reason I cannot prolong my stay any longer than necessary with you, but I shall be here long enough to advise with the Arikis, Mataipos and Rangitiras on any subject on which they may consult me. If any European has a grievance I shall be equally glad to hear what he has to say, and will assist him in any reasonable way in my power, should I consider his grievance just.

The Governor communicated a despatch which he had received from the Hon. Joseph Chamberlain, Secretary for the Colonies, establishing a High Court for the trial of Europeans and for the hearing of the important native litigation, and also appointing the British Resident (Lient. Colonel Gudgeon), Chief Justice. The new departure in the administration of justice has been now consummated a formal proclamation, making the new order of things operative from April 22. Pa Arikis is also a judge of the Court, and Mr W. B. Craig is registrar.

The address was interpreted to the natives, after which the British Resident stated that His Excellency would hold a levee, and at the conclusion he would hear any complaint that might be brought before him.

All the Europeans present were then introduced by Col. Gudgeon.

After hearing the various grievances His Excellency, accompanied by several officers of the Mildura, visited various parts of the island. At Ngutangia, the chief settlement of that portion of Rarotonga under the rule of Pa Arikis, he was entertained in the best native style. After delivering a speech, several presents of hats, hats, etc., were made to His Excellency, and after a most tempting luncheon had been discussed, in which roast pork figured prominently, native dancing and singing occupied the rest of the afternoon. The dancing was most attentively watched and the songs listened to by Lord Ranfurly.

While in the island Lord Ranfurly christened a new bridge, visited the Tereora school, under the control of the London Missionary Society, and

Makea settlement. Later on the Mildura took him to Aitutaki, the only island of the Group really annexed to England, and the island of Manuai, which was discovered by Captain Cook. At Aitutaki His Excellency laid the foundation stone of the new boarding school which is to be erected by the London Mission Society. There the native children are to be taught English as at Tereora. Native dancing, singing, etc., filled up the rest of the time of the Governor's stay for the day, and at 5 p.m. the Mildura left again for Rarotonga, where she arrived at 9 a.m. next (Saturday) morning.

At 1 p.m. the Arikis and chiefs were entertained by His Excellency on board the Mildura, and soon afterwards she left for New Zealand.



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