

Island Lepers.

(From Our Owa Correspondent.)

AITUTAKI, April 30.

Not long back I drew attention to Dr. Mason's (the New Zealand Government Medical Officer) report upon these islands, and especially to that part where he urged that the Government medical officer residing at Rarotonga should at frequent intervals visit the various other islands of this group. The importance of this is being almost daily brought home to us here. At the island of Penrhyn, as is well known, leprosy is very prevalent, but there is no one to see that proper care is bestowed upon those suffering, nor to prevent communication between the sick and those free of the disease. There are many suffering from leprosy roaming about the various villages of Penrhyn, and as they can freely visit the other islands the consequence is the disease is spreading among the other islands of the group, and it is now well established at Raka-banga and Manihiki. Captain Harries, of the auxiliary schooner Vaite, recently returned from a trip to Palmerston Island, and he reported to the New Zealand Government agent (Lieut.-Colonel Gudgeon) that there were two cases there. They were isolated, but were without clothing, and very little attention was being paid to them. He provided the sufferers with some clothing from his trading stock. It is certainly time some firm steps were taken by the Government to check the spread of this foul disease. There is an island at Penrhyn set apart for the lepers, and the Government should collect all those suffering at the other islands and have them conveyed to this quarantine station. At the rate at which the disease is spreading there is danger of it reaching New Zealand.

Cook Islands.

(From Our Own Correspondent.)

RAROTONGA, 2nd May.

The Government schooner Countess of Ranfurly arrived here from Maiden Island, Penrhyn, and Niue, on the 15th April, and left again on the 17th April for Mauke, Mitiaro, Atiu, & Mauae, and after visiting those islands, arrived at Rarotonga on the 27th April. The schooner finally left Rarotonga for Niue and Auckland, via Atiu and Aitutaki, on the 29th April. She carries as cargo from the group for Auckland, a small amount of limejuice and copra, in all, about 25 tons, and should be due at Auckland about the 25th inst. The vessel will then return to Rarotonga, via Niue and Samoa, proceeding to the latter place under special charter, to bring back some 20 or 30 natives of Rarotonga, who have been on a visit to Samoa. On arrival of the schooner at Auckland, it is probably that Captain Worsley, R.N.R., will resign his position as captain of the vessel.

It is stated on good authority that the cost to the Cook Islands Administration of running the schooner for the year ending 31st March has been about £1000. This includes the cost of insurance, over £300 per annum.

Lieut. Col. Gudgeon, accompanied by Mr H. M. Connal, surveyor, and Mr Savage, Interpreter, visited the islands of Mauke, Atiu, and Mitiaro in the Countess of Ranfurly. Sittings of the Land Court and of the High Court were held at each island.

The London Missionary Society's steamer John Williams arrived from Sydney on 1st inst. after a pleasant voyage. The steamer left to visit the islands of the Cook Group on the 2nd inst., and will return to Rarotonga in about eight days, after which she will proceed to Penrhyn and the Northern Islands, taking with her, in addition to the members of the mission, the Resident Commissioner, Lt. Col. Gudgeon, who will thus pay his annual visit to the Northern Islands. The John Williams is due back in Rarotonga about the 2nd June, after which she will leave for Niue and Samoa. After calling at all the Samoan stations and out-stations, she will sail for Sydney, reaching that port about 14th August. Mr. Legg, a legal doctor practising in Sydney, is a passenger by the steamer.

The vital statistics of the island of Mangaia for 1903, as compiled by the Rev. Hon. J. James, of the London Missionary Society, are as follows:—Births, 54; deaths, 52; marriages, 5; population—males, 746; females, 701; total, 1507.

Much dissatisfaction is being expressed at the manner in which the main road round the island is being repaired; in some parts it is impossible to drive a loaded waggon, owing to the wheels slugging into the sand piled on the road inches thick. Under the present system, the work of repairing is done by natives, without any proper supervision, their work being taken as an equivalent to a tax. A reform in the direction of European supervision, paid labour, and a small road tax payable by each native, as in former times, is much needed.

Chief Detective Grace Retired.

Chief Detective Grace, of Auckland, who has reached the age-limit, 65 years, is about to retire on a pension. He has been granted three months' holiday, leave prior to severing his connection with the police force. Mr Dinnie, Commissioner of Police, informs our Wellington correspondent that the question of the appointment of a successor is now under consideration, and a decision is likely to be arrived at within the next few days.

Mr Grace joined the New Zealand police service in August, 1870, and previous to this he had served four years in the Royal Irish Constabulary, and a similar period in the New South Wales police. His first station was at the Thames, and he then came to Auckland. After spending some years at Napier, where he was transferred, he returned to Auckland in 1892 upon his appointment as chief detective, and has held the position ever since. He has been always known as a careful and able officer, who got through a great deal of work but allowed few outside the official circle to know what he had achieved. His particular aversion was publicity, and although he has been connected with the detection of many a sensational crime about which he could tell an interesting story, he declines to be reminiscent to a pressman. He takes his leave of the service early next week, and retires on a substantial superannuation allowance. As he is in good health, many years of life are probably ahead of this veteran public servant.

Greater Auckland Movement.

The result of the poll on the question of the amalgamation of the Borough of Grey Lynn with the City of Auckland was decided for the present as far as the growing suburb was concerned against the Greater Auckland movement. Very little interest was taken in the matter, only 741 votes being recorded out of a total of 2700 on the roll. The result was: For amalgamation, 330; against, 411; majority against the proposal, 81. The voting at the separate booths was as follows:—St. George's Hall: For amalgamation, 140; against 765. Council Chambers: For, 145; against 181. Richmond Hall: For, 39; against, 65. The proposal was, therefore, negatived at each of the three polling booths. When Mr Irwin (the returning officer) announced the result to the 70 or 80 people waiting cheers were given at the news.

A CLOTHIER'S CONVICTION.

Mr F. Cohen, of Willis-street, Wellington, is a busy business man, with no time to waste on letter writing for fun. Mr Cohen says:—"Last Friday I experienced a very bad attack of rheumatic gout, in fact so bad that I had to leave business, and being unable to walk I was assisted to a cab. On arrival at home I immediately took a dose of your Rheumo, repeating same every four hours. The pain soon left, and in the morning I came down to business as usual. I cannot say too much for the prompt and effectual manner in which your Rheumo acts on pain." Rheumo cures every time. Chemists and stores, 2/6 and 4/6 per bottle.

Stocked in Auckland by H. King, Chemist, Queen-st.; J. M. Jefferson, Chemist, Queen-st. and Upper Symonds-st.; J. W. Robinson, Chemist, Parcell; Graves Aikin, Chemist, Queen-st.; and sold by all Chemists and stores, at 2/6 and 4/6 per bottle. Wholesale Agents: N.Z. DRUG CO.

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GUESSING COMPETITION.

HOW MANY BOYS AND HOW MANY GIRLS?

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RESULT OF COMPETITION.

- 1st. R. V. Deacon, c/o J. Gibb, Esq., Christchurch.
- 2nd. Miss Minnie Ihle, Hokowihiu, Palmerston North.
- 3rd. Miss Lula Droper, Club Hotel, Blenheim.
- 4th. E. Deacon, c/o Loan and Mercantile, Christchurch.

CORRECT NUMBERS—

131 GIRLS 139 BOYS

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