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The Parliamentary Tour.

Auckland Star, Volume XXXIV, Issue 130, 2 June 1903, Page 3

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The Parliamentary Tour

THE CRUISE OF THE MAPOURIKA.

SOME IMPRESSIONS

("Star" Special.)

(Continued.)

THE GRAVE OF STEVENSON.

To most English-speaking people the main interest in Samoa centres in the fact that here Robert Louis Stevenson lived for many years, and that here on the top of a high hill overlooking Apia Harbour all that remains of him lies buried. It was only natural, then, that out of a party of New Zealanders visiting Apia a good many of them should make a pilgrimage to his old home. The distance from Apia is said to be only 3½ miles, but as it is up a pretty steep hill, if you walk it on a hot day it seems quite double that distance. On the way to the house you pass Papatua, the Native Girls' High School, conducted by Misses Schultze and Joliffe. It is quite a large boarding-school establishment, where the daughters of chiefs and leading men all over the Islands are sent to be educated. The Villa Vailima, where Stevenson lived, is now the property of Herr Kunst, a German millionaire. It has been added to considerably since Stevenson's time, but many of the rooms where he lived and worked remain exactly as he knew them. To a genuine admirer of Stevenson the impulse comes to take off his shoes, for the place is hallowed ground.

The German occupation of Samoa may cause a passing regret to the commercial spirit of the Empire, but the thought that Stevenson's old home and his tomb is in a foreign country brings a deeper twinge of regret than words can well express. Judging from appearances the present owner of Vailima is not careful to cultivate pilgrimages to the tomb, as the track up the hill is difficult to follow. Visitors are courteously allowed to inspect the house and grounds, the latter being kept in splendid order. Several parties essayed the rather difficult

task of ascending the hill to visit the tomb. One party, consisting of an Auckland and Dunedin member, missed the track, and after two hours' arduous climbing through tropical scrub found themselves at the top of a high hill some miles away from the spot they were aiming at. When they returned from rolling and climbing the mountain sides even their washerwoman would not have recognised their white drill suits, and new ones had to be procured before they were respectable enough to call on the Governor. Another party was more fortunate, and found the place after three-quarters of an hour's hard climbing, and to the end of their days they will continue to wonder how the Samoans ever managed to carry their loved one to his last resting-place. Great must have been the affection of a people who would undertake such a herculean task. The spot is beautifully situated on the very top of a high hill, looking down from the one side to the old home where Stevenson spent many happy days; on the other side the view extends over the town and harbour of Apia out on the great Pacific, which was the inspiration of many of his thrilling tales. The inscription on his tomb is exceedingly appropriate to the man and the place:

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

Under the wide and starry sky,
Dig the grave and let me lie;
Glad did I live and gladly die,
And I laid me down with a will.

And this the verse you grave for me.
Here he lies where he longed to be;
Home is the sailor, home from the sea,
And the hunter home from the hill.

The total population of German Samoa is about 37,000, of whom 200 are whites and 300 half-castes. Dr. Solf, the Governor, came on board and dined with the Minister in the evening, and at 12 p.m. the Mapourika steamed out of Apia Harbour on the way to the Island of Niue.

I had almost forgotten to mention the great double canoe we saw at Samoa. The immense size of the thing came as a surprise, and for the first time we could understand how the natives navigated the South Seas. The structure consisted of two large canoes measuring 76 to 78 feet long, connected with a platform about 40 feet long and 20 feet wide. The canoes were hollowed out, giving quite a large hold. On the top platform there was an elevated structure, apparently to break the wind and give shelter from the sun. The whole was built out of a very few pieces of timber, and not a single nail used in its construction. With the addition of a chart and compass it would not be difficult to get men to-day to circumnavigate the world with such a craft, and as the Maoris are supposed to have found no difficulty in steering by the sun and stars their reported long voyages become quite credible. This particular canoe is not a very ancient one, having been built by a chief, Lalatoa, on the Island of Savaii, within the last twenty years. The Rev. Dr. Davies, whom we afterwards met at Niue, remembers the chief and his people building it while he was a missionary in Samoa. The Samoan Government have presented it to the German Kaiser, and it is now covered over with an iron shed awaiting some means of conveying it to Berlin.

Our Poet Laureate, Sir W. J. Steward, has kept casting the incidents of the trip into poetry, which your readers will be interested in when the whole is completed. Meantime I send you a few classical lines from his pen which have been printed on board, and circulated in the form of a souvenir amongst the members of the party.

THE HAPPY ISLES.

Isles of peerless beauty,
Isles of bliss are these;
Pearls of the Pacific,
Set in sapphire seas.

Land of palms and orange groves,
Land of coral white,
Land of golden sunshine,
Summer land of light.

Land where love's sweet music
Speeds the happy hours,
Songs of dusky maidens,
Garlanded with flowers.

Happy Isles of Beauty,
None on earth so fair,
If there be a paradise,
Surely it is there.

TWO DAYS AT NIUE.

A run of 36 hours from Apia landed us at the island of Niue. The British Resident (Mr Maxwell) lives at Alofi, which place affords the best shelter, the best anchorage, and the best landing place.

We got ashore about half-past one on Friday, 15th May, island time, and soon the news spread to all parts of the island that we had arrived, natives and white traders gathering at Alofi from all directions.

We had learned that the Niue people were the most dissatisfied with the annexation to New Zealand of all the Islanders, and that we were likely to hear a good deal of grumbling. In this we were not disappointed.

A meeting was arranged for the Saturday morning, at which the King and his people would be present to express their grievances.

At the appointed time old King Togiia (pronounced Tongia), came marching in from his village some miles distant, dressed in a black frock coat, with three rows of gold braid round the cuffs, and a red stripe up the sides of his pants, and a belltopper on his head. Following on his heels came the Royal Band and a motley crowd of all sorts of people. The band consisted of drummers, with native and European drums, and a few kerosene tins.

One important gentleman, named Jacob, got up regardless of expense and good taste, seemed to boss the show as director of ceremonies. He wore a gorgeous cocked hat and his uniform was almost covered with red and yellow trimmings. Someone suggested he resembled the Kaiser in the uniform of the Guards, and certainly even the Kaiser could not have donned a more startling uniform.

When the Minister had made his complimentary speech and intimated his willingness to hear what they had to say, old King Togiia asked to be introduced to all the party, and so the members filed past the old chap and shook hands, and a good many of them wished they had not, or had brought a pair of gloves with them for the purpose.

The King suffers from some form of skin disease, which detracts a good deal from the pleasure of shaking hands with Royalty.

When the hand-shaking ceremony was finished the King welcomed the party in a friendly manner, and intimated that it had been arranged that five of the chiefs would speak on behalf of the whole, but when they saw so many members had come from New Zealand they had decided to increase the number of speakers to ten. This was by no means welcome news to the bulk of the members, who had been sitting for an hour in the broiling sun waiting for the meeting to commence, the Minister having been detained on other business.

The Minister mildly suggested they would prefer the smaller number; if not, he hoped the speakers would condense what they had to say, as the members of his party were not used to sitting for hours in such heat.

A STRING OF GRIEVANCES

Pulekula, a native teacher, and one of the most competent men on the island, had been chosen to make the main speech, and lay before the members the grievances of Niue. He pointed out that what the people of Niue had asked for and consented to was annexation to Great Britain, not to New Zealand. They had never been consulted, and had never consented to such annexation; at the same time, seeing that Great Britain had handed them over to be governed from New Zealand, they were prepared to make the best of it, as long as it was New Zealand. But they most emphatically objected to be again handed over by New Zealand to be governed by Rarotonga. They did not know anything about Rarotonga, and did not want their laws.

Every speaker was most emphatic on this point, and it was quite clear that this was a deep-seated sore.

The next point was that they did not want any liquor landed on the island, either for white man or native. Their experience was that when liquor was landed nominally for white men the natives got some of it. It was possible to trade cheaply with it. There were very few white people on the island, and when they came there to trade with the natives they should be prepared to fall in with conditions which were necessary in the interests of the natives.

They also objected to the very heavy Customs duties which they had to pay, especially the duty on tobacco and the heavy charges on personal luggage which natives returning from labour on other islands had to pay. It seems that Niue men go away to labour on Maldon and other islands, and get half their wages in goods, on which they have to pay duty when they return. Tobacco has for long been quite an item of the currency of the island, and paid no duty; now, with the New Zealand duty added, they got less than half the quantity of tobacco for their goods which they used to do.

They were led to believe by Mr Percy Smith that 10 per cent. would be all that would be charged, and now on some things they were paying 30 per cent., 50 per cent., and on tobacco 200 or 300 per cent.

FACTS ABOUT THE ISLAND PEOPLE

Then there was the land question. They wanted the sale of land to be prohibited for all time.

The island was small and much of it was rocky and unfit to grow anything, and if natives sold their land they would either starve or live on their neighbours. or go away to other islands as labourers. They also wanted to know about the traders' license. Lord Ranfurly had told them in a letter that this did not apply to natives, but there was some doubt about it; in any case, they did not see why any traders should pay license in Niue when they did not pay license in New Zealand. If they were in New Zealand, let them be in New Zealand, and not make this difference. The duty on horses ought also to be set aside.

They wanted to know about the charges made for men who went away to labour on other islands and had the money deducted from them when they returned. Who got the money and so forth? In fact, they wanted to know what was done with all the money collected at Niue, and thought they ought to have one of themselves in the Treasury to see that everything was all right. They wanted all the money collected at Niue to remain and be spent at Niue. Hitherto they had seen nothing but the collecting of the money. They had built a large house for the Resident Agent, and handed it over to him without charging anything for their work; they had also turned out and made roads for nothing, but now they wanted to be paid for their work on the roads, etc. They also asked that iron for roofing churches and mission buildings should be admitted duty free.

One man was understood to be making a complaint about paper money on the island, saying that when the traders sent them a message or got work from them they gave a piece of paper to get goods at their store. They wanted to be paid in cash for everything.

The interpreting here was the most unsatisfactory on the trip. Whenever the natives said anything disagreeable to the interpreter he appeared to argue the point with them, and it was only after protests from some of the party that the foregoing complaint about paper money was elicited. When the speechmaking had concluded and the Minister had stated that the several points raised would be carefully considered, and if possible redress given, the King then stood up and said it was their usual custom to conclude any great gathering like the present with prayer, and if they would now give attention he would pray, and proceeded to close the meeting with a long and vigorous prayer. Then followed dances by the women and men separately, the men's war dance being the most weird and thrilling we had seen. A painful and regrettable incident followed the women's dance, one of the performers, who had been exerting herself, vigorously, fell down, apparently in a faint. Messengers were at once despatched to the Rev. Dr. Davies, who prepared some medicine, and hurried to the spot, where Dr. Mason had also found his way, but the poor woman had expired, evidently from some heart affection, which could not stand the strain of the dance. Presentations of food, oranges, sugar-cane, etc., were made by the natives, and the Minister presented the New Zealand flag and a framed photo of the King and Queen.

The traders also had interviews with the Minister and members, their complaints being specially about the tobacco duty and the license fees.

The Niue people are very industrious, especially in the making of hats, mats, string beads, etc. In most of these things they are indebted to the Nicholas and Head families, who have resided on the island for a great many years. Mr. Head was wrecked in the missionary schooner about 36 or 37 years ago, along with the Rev. Dr. Davies, who was then on his way to Samoa.

Dr. Davies arrived by the John Williams the same day as we did, to take up the work of the Rev. Frank Laws, who has left for his furlough in Europe.

It was particularly unfortunate for the party that the Rev. Frank Laws should have left the island just a day or two before they arrived. It is admitted by all who know the Pacific that no man there knows so much about Niue and the Niue people as Mr. Laws.

Dr. Davies, who had just arrived to take his place, showed the visitors every kindness and consideration he could, but although an old Samoan missionary, and one who had visited Niue once or twice before, he could not fill the place just vacated by Mr. Laws.

The traders on this island, with the exception of Mr. Head and Mrs. Nicholas, are all young men, and one wonders why they should leave more civilised lands to settle in such a place. It is to be hoped their conduct will be such as to elevate and not lower the natives among whom their lot is cast.

The principal article of export from this, as from most of the other islands, is copra. It is the largest island of those recently annexed to New Zealand, and contains nearly a half of the total population of the annexed territory, so that the complaint about being governed from Rarotonga appears to be a genuine grievance. The appearance of the island is very different from the Samoas, being pretty level all over, simply an elevated coral rock. All round the coast the rocks rise precipitously from 50 to 100 feet, with frequent caves in the rocks. The island is poorly supplied with water. A good deal of it is carried up out of caves, and is quite brackish in taste.

At 6 p.m. on Saturday night, May 16, we left Niue, formerly known as Savage Island, and to be known in the future according to Mr. Seddon as the "Island of Love," and steamed almost due west towards the Tonga Group.

ON TONGAN SOIL

One of the sights near Talofe, where we landed, is known as the Tongan Cave. This consists of a deep rift in the rock, and the tradition is that a Tongan war party landed on the island, and the natives laid a trap for them by covering over the rift in the rocks with banana and cocoanut leaves. The Niue men, appearing to run away, lured the Tongans to destruction by being dashed into the caves.

One of the Auckland members had something of an experience on the island. He got hold of a horse to ride over to Avatele to visit some Auckland people living there. He had the company of a native going out, but when he attempted to come back his horse declined to come without company. After exhausting all his persuasive powers the member had to leave his horse with a native to bring him in next day, and had to walk back a distance of 5½ miles. As it got dark by the way, and the path was not very clearly defined, the experience was not a very pleasant one.

On the evening the ship was lying in the bay a brilliant display of fireworks was given, helped out by the firing of the ship's guns. It is to be hoped the entertainment thus afforded the natives will reconcile them to the payment of heavy customs duties and other drawbacks incidental to their New Zealand relationship.

We left Vavau at one o'clock on the 18th, and reached Nukualofa at 7.30 on the morning of the 19th May, but as Tonga, though east of the 180th degree, keeps New Zealand time, it is really the 20th of May.

(To be continued.)

THE FAREWELL TO THE SHIP

A run of 24 hours brought us to Vavau, where we had the luxury of stepping off the ship on to a wharf. There are about 100 islands in the Tongan Group, and Vavau and the islands round about it account for between 60 and 70 of these. The appearance as you enter into the harbour reminds one of the Bay of Islands, and as you get further in you think of the bays of Sydney Harbour, giving a vote in favour of the superiority of Vavau. Neiafu, where the principal wharf is situated, seems an important business centre, and the surrounding bays are very beautiful, but the place in the evening is very quiet. Even the excitement of the arrival of the New Zealand Government yacht, with its distinguished party on board, failed to attract more than a handful of people, mostly natives with clam shells and oranges, which they wished to turn into cash.

It was very noticeable that not a single woman or girl came on to the wharf during the evening, very different from Tahiti and Samoa and Niue, where the majority were females.

You cannot strike any part of Tonga without remembering that this is the land where Rev. Shirley Baker ruled as Premier for many years, and was deported for many years by the High Commissioner of the Western Pacific. It is probably true that he was arbitrary in the exercise of his great powers, that he was inclined to crush with too great severity anyone who opposed his will, but I firmly believe that history will give the rev. gentleman credit for having done much good work for the people of Tonga. His methods were different from the methods

of other missionaries, but the result from the natives' point of view has not left a great deal to complain about. The total population of the Tongan Islands is about 21,000, or nearly twice the total population in New Zealand beyond the seas. On the morning after we landed several of the party went to the top of a hill in the neighbourhood to get a view of the Archipelago. Most of the party went to the large cave known as the cave of the swallows. It is a large opening in the coral rocks, capable of accommodating quite a large number of boats inside. The water is clear and blue, and at a great depth the various forms of the coral can be plainly seen. There is another cave known as Marriner's Cave, where you dive into the water and pass underneath the coral reef, and come up in a large cave on the other side. Only very few Europeans have attempted the feat of diving, which is a difficult one. A captain of a man-o'-war in doing it some years ago received injuries to his back, from which he died.

A deputation of the traders at Neiafu, Vavau, waited on the Minister, and complained of the treatment to which their fruit was subjected in New Zealand. They asked that they should be treated in the same manner as the Cook Islands.

On the Saturday evening before the vessel reached port a very pleasant gathering took place in the saloon of the steamer, when the party's appreciation of the manner in which they had been treated on board was expressed to the ship's company. The members of the party having assembled, the Hon. Mr Mills said, addressing Captain Crawshaw: "As we hope to reach Auckland early on Monday morning, I think this is the most fitting time to go through a pleasing little ceremony with you. You probably know that a good many of our members reside in Auckland and will leave us there, and I would not like them to part before we present the testimonial which we have prepared to hand to you. I am exceedingly sorry that we cannot unfortunately give it to you in its proper form, but we propose to ask you to kindly attend at Bellamy's, in Wellington, after we have the testimonial engrossed and framed, and then we shall be able to present it to you in proper form. I also wish to include the chief engineer, and ask him to kindly attend at the same time, as we have also to present him with a link of remembrance of this exceedingly pleasant trip. I can assure you that we shall all leave the Mapourika with the best of good feelings towards you. I will now read what has been prepared for me to hand you, and I can only say that it is a very pleasurable duty for me to perform.'

The address was then read as follows:—"To Commander George Crawshaw. Dear Sir,—On the eve of our return to New Zealand from the Parliamentary visit to the Cook Islands, Tahiti, Tutuila, Upolu, Tonga, and Fiji, we cannot leave the comfortable steamer and you, her genial commander, without expressing our very high appreciation of the kindness and courtesy you have extended to us all during the seven weeks we have been on board the s.s. Mapourika. The excellent and careful management of the steamer throughout the voyage has upheld the high reputation you have already established, and conclusively shown us how capable you were to navigate her among the islands and intricate reefs which are scattered about in the South Pacific Ocean. We now ask you to kindly accept this testimonial, with the accompanying gold souvenir, as a token of our esteem, and heartily wishing you every advancement in your profession, with long life and continued prosperity for yourself and your wife and family. We remain, dear sir, yours sincerely, C. H. Mills, for self and members of the N.Z. Parliamentary Party. S.s. Mapourika, Auckland, 1st June, 1903."

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Continuing, Mr Mills said: "When the testimonial is engrossed I wish to get all the members and everyone who came with the party to join in this and attach their names to it before it is framed, so that it will be a lasting link of memory of the pleasant time we have spent on board together. The good feeling for yourself and all on board is general and universal. I am to ask you to accept this copy in the meantime."

At the suggestion of the Minister, Captain Crawshaw's health was then drunk with enthusiasm, the party singing "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow."

Commander Crawshaw, in responding, said: "Sir,—I feel so embarrassed upon hearing you read the very flattering and unexpected recital of my alleged virtues, that I can scarcely thank you enough for your very handsome present. I can assure you, Sir, that I shall set great store by it, and shall be proud to show it to passengers on other trips, which can never be so interesting as this one has been. Although I have been some years in the Pacific, on the present voyage I have been able to visit a number of islands quite new to me, and notwithstanding the poetic difference of opinion as to their beauty and other attributes, I can honestly say that it has been far more of a pleasure than a working trip to me, and the joy at getting home again is tinctured with regret that the voyage will so soon be over. I have also to thank you, gentlemen, on behalf of the ship's company, for the generous forbearance and kindness which you have exercised in overlooking the very many vexatious situations which must occur on a voyage of this length, and have to say that it would be difficult to find such a number of people who would make themselves so agreeable to the ship's company as you one and all have done on this first Parliamentary trip, and I hope that when the next trip takes place you will all be on board to renew your acquaintance with the many pearls of the Pacific."

Mr Mills, then addressing Mr White, the chief steward, said: "On behalf of myself and party on board here, I have to express how much we feel that everything has been done that you possibly could do for us since we left Wellington. We quite understand there were many difficulties which you had to surmount on such a trip through the warmer climate of the tropics, and must congratulate you on overcoming them. There is no doubt that stewards never feel perfectly satisfied with what they have done—never rise to their ideal in other words—but I can assure you that as far as every one of us are concerned we feel that nothing better could have been arranged for us. You have been most kindly, attentive and considerate in your duties, and

tentive and considerate in your [illegible] we are more than satisfied. (Members: Hear, hear.) I have, therefore, to ask you to accept this purse as a mark of our esteem. I have also to present you with this envelope containing £42. which I shall be glad if you will kindly divide amongst those under you. I have much pleasure, Mr White, in handing it to you."

Mr White, in response, said: "Gentlemen, —On behalf of my staff I wish to thank you very much for the kindness which you have shown towards us, and if I should ever again have to go on an excursion similar to this. I hope that I will meet with such a number of contented gentlemen as I have met on this occasion. Gentlemen, I again thank you." (Hear, hear,. and applause.)

Letters were given by the Minister on behalf of himself and party to the several officers of the ship, in appreciation of their good services during the time they were on board the Mapourika.

At the suggestion of the Minister the whole company then rose and sang "God Save the King."