

## No. 146.

SIR,—

Niue, 25th February, 1904.

No. 86.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 110, of the 15th October, 1903, with reference to having a boat-channel made through the reef at Tuapa.

I am afraid the work that could be accomplished by a warship in the short time at her disposal would be of very little practical utility, as the lagoon inside the lip of the reef is too shallow to admit of the passage of boats to the shore, and to cut a passage the whole way would require many weeks' labour to drill and blast out the coral rock.

However, upon the arrival of the warship we will see what can be done, and I will furnish any labour required.

I have, &amp;c.,

C. F. MAXWELL,

Resident Commissioner, Niue.

The Hon. C. H. Mills, Minister of Trade and Customs, Wellington.

## No. 147.

SIR,—

Rarotonga, Cook Islands, 27th February, 1904.

No. 101.

Remarks having been made by certain of the members of the House of Representatives who visited Penrhyn to the effect that the lepers did not receive proper food, I have now the honour to forward a report from Captain Nagle on the subject, together with an account of receipts and expenditure, showing that \$296 has been expended in the purchase of food.

It does not appear to have entered the minds of those who visited the lepers that they were in a measure independent of outside supplies, having all the nuts of the most fertile island of the lagoon at their disposal.

I have, &amp;c.,

W. E. GUDGEON,

Resident Commissioner.

The Hon. C. H. Mills, Minister for the Islands, Wellington.

## No. 148.

SIR,—

Niue, 27th February, 1904.

No. 71.

In my letter to you, No. 130, of the 31st December, 1903, I alluded to your plan for the purchase of the schooner "Countess of Ranfurly" by the Islands, letter dated 21st September, and received 28th December, 1903.

I have since had an opportunity of hearing Colonel Gudgeon's views on the subject. He appears to think that, in view of the decrease in revenue arising from so much of the duties on goods for the Islands being retained in New Zealand, it would be better to sell the "Countess" than for us to attempt to purchase her.

This argument might also apply to Niue, for now the duty on tobacco is reduced there is likely to be a considerable falling-off in the revenue.

At the same time I think it would be a pity if the schooner were sold, as we should then be absolutely dependent on the "Ysabel" and at the mercy of Messrs. Vines, Utting, and Perston as regards freights.

Niue occupies rather a peculiar position; the bulk of her produce (copra) goes to Tonga, hats and fungus only being shipped to Auckland. An unfortunate circumstance is that almost the whole of her export trade is in the hands of men who are not free agents—i.e., are obliged to ship by the vessels belonging to or chartered by their firms.

If the "Countess" made periodical trips to Tonga and Auckland, as we should expect if we subsidised her, she would be sure of support. A service to the eastward, Aitutaki, &c., would be of little use to us. In order to make the vessel a success she should be run on different lines from hitherto, and a change made in the command.

I do not know upon what basis the proportion of instalment under the scale to be adopted payable by Niue would be computed, whether population or volume of trade, or how any deficiency would be met if the schooner did not pay expenses. If by the Islands, she would probably prove a white elephant, and have to be sold. At the same time, if arrangements on the lines promised by you can be made to credit the Islands with even two-thirds of the duty on goods shipped to them from New Zealand, I am confident we could buy the vessel outright in a very short time.

I have, &amp;c.,

C. F. MAXWELL,

Resident Commissioner, Niue.

The Hon. C. H. Mills, Minister of Trade and Customs, Wellington.

## No. 149.

SIR,—

Niue, 1st March, 1904.

No. 99.

In reply to your letter No. 135, of the 30th October, 1903, giving prices for moorings, I have the honour to state that shipmasters with whom I have discussed the matter think a  $1\frac{3}{4}$  in. stud-cable would be sufficiently stout for the purpose. This would cost approximately £80 or £90 for 60 fathoms. As an anchor is available, it would only be necessary to obtain a buoy and necessary gear, which would cost, say, £40: cost of laying and contingencies, £20. The total cost of the moorings should not exceed £150. If too-heavy moorings were put down it would be diffi-