

and banana. This is almost invariably done in remote valleys, and Sunday is the day chosen for the orgie. Numbers of men are punished for this offence, but the punishment does not deter the offenders from brewing more beer whenever opportunity offers, and the mission influence in such cases is nil.

Personally, I fail to see any difference between the drunkenness caused by orange-beer and that which is the result of imported liquor. It appears to me to be one and the same offence, but there are people who think otherwise, and ascribe the drinking to the imported liquor. That an effort should be made to stop the illicit sale of imported spirits to Maoris is beyond question, but the bush-beer drinking could only be prevented by an expensive police system that is beyond our means.

The consumption of imported liquor may be limited and controlled, either by a licensed hotel under the restrictions imposed by the Sale of Liquor Ordinance or by the following regulation. First, that the sole right to import spirituous liquor shall devolve upon the local Government, and that a heavy penalty shall be imposed upon any private person breaking this rule; second, that the local Government shall sell the liquor so imported at a price which will render it impossible for sly-grog sellers to make a profit thereon, say, 6s. 6d. per bottle; third, that the local Government shall build an hotel for the accommodation of travellers at a cost of not exceeding £2,000, and may place the hotel in the hands of a reliable person for the sale of liquor only; fourth, the local Government may give the hotel rent-free to the aforesaid reliable person, who shall undertake to provide accommodation for tourists and visitors, and sell on behalf of the Government the liquor imported by them at the prices previously fixed.

I would submit for your consideration that the only question of importance is the hotel-accommodation for travellers. If a license could be given there would be no necessity for the Government to undertake the building, for it would not be difficult in such case to find men who would do this; but if it be decided that there shall not be a license, then the local administration must put up the building.

I have, &c.,

W. E. GUDGEON,

Resident Commissioner.

Hon. C. H. Mills, Minister for the Cook Islands.

No. 44.

SIR, Harris Street, Wellington, New Zealand, 10th August, 1903.

We beg most respectfully to draw your attention to the unsatisfactory shipping arrangements in connection with produce coming from the Cook Islands.

We are, as you are aware, doing our best to develop a steady trade, but at present we are labouring under a very great disadvantage owing to the delay in receiving shipments. For your information, we may mention that, although the "Taviuni" arrived at Auckland on Thursday last, the fruit brought by her will not reach Wellington until about Tuesday next, or nearly a week after arriving at the northern port. The cases are transhipped at Auckland into a steamer coming south, and apart from the delay this causes, they naturally receive a considerable amount of rough handling, which does not conduce to effect a satisfactory sale of the fruit when it reaches the Wellington market.

The Cook Islands are now part of New Zealand, and we respectfully submit that some special consideration should be given to produce coming from there. The Union Steamship Company send the steamers which bring fruit from Fiji, from Auckland to Wellington, and there is therefore no transhipment no extra handling, and very little delay—the very opposite to the case with fruit from the Cook Islands—and we are therefore at a great disadvantage as compared with Auckland merchants.

Knowing that you are taking a personal interest in the development of the Cook Island trade, we deem it our duty to mention the present unsatisfactory shipping arrangements. Trusting that this matter will receive your favourable consideration.

We have, &c.,

C. A. GRIFFITHS AND Co.

The Hon. C. H. Mills, Commissioner of Customs, Wellington.

No. 45.

SIR,—Minister's Office, Trade and Customs, Wellington, 11th August, 1903.

In reply to your communication of the 10th instant, *re* produce coming from the Cook No. 44. Islands, I have to say that I shall be very pleased to hear from you at any time on matters affecting the trade and welfare of the Islands, should any information come to your notice.

I quite realise the disadvantage you labour under, and will see what can be done to improve matters.

Yours, &c.,

Messrs. C. A. Griffiths and Co., Harris Street, Wellington.

C. H. MILLS.

No. 46.

SIR,—Minister's Office, Trade and Customs, Wellington, 11th August, 1903.

Mr. Vile, M.H.R., has the following question on the Order Paper: "Mr. Vile to ask the Commissioner of Trade and Customs if he will move in the direction of inducing the Union Steamship Company to make Wellington the port of call for the Cook and Society Islands trade?" Will you kindly give me your views on this subject?

3—A. 3.