

No. 89.

SIR,—

Cook and other Islands Administration, Wellington, 28th October, 1904.

Referring to the question of leasing islands to private firms or companies, of which mention was made in your annual report for last year (with special reference to Manuae), I shall be glad to hear further from you as to the proposal to take over Manuae and work it as a Government plantation. Do you recommend negotiating with the Cook Island Trading Company for the purchase of their lease, and, if so, can you say on what terms they would be willing to sell? Please let me have a report on the matter generally.

See A.—8,
1904,
No. 169.

I have, &c.,

The Resident Commissioner, Rarotonga.

C. H. MILLS.

No. 90.

SIR,—

Cook and other Islands Administration, Wellington, 28th October, 1904.

I have to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 5th August, No. 69/04, and enclose herewith a Warrant signed by His Excellency the Governor, appointing Mr. Henry Williams Resident Agent for the Tukao Division of Manihiki. He already holds an appointment for the Tauhono Division. The appointment will be published in next week's *Gazette*.

No. 42.

I have, &c.,

The Resident Commissioner, Rarotonga.

C. H. MILLS.

No. 91.

SIR,—

Cook and other Islands Administration, Wellington, 28th October, 1904.

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 12th September, with reference to the Cook and other Islands Government Act Amendment Bill. I note what you say as to the necessity for forcing progress upon the people of the Islands; but, while I sympathize with your desire to advance the interests of the Islands as rapidly as possible, I think we must act with considerable care in introducing what may appear to the Natives as drastic innovations. There has been a good deal of discussion in both Houses in connection with the Bill, and there was a strong feeling that the Natives should be interfered with as little as possible, especially in matters affecting their land rights. I can quite understand that you will find it difficult to induce the Council to pass an Ordinance enforcing the leasing and improvement of waste lands, but this fact only seems to emphasize the need of caution in introducing changes for which they are not prepared, and which they may possibly regard as an infringement of the terms and conditions of annexation. I think therefore the questions of imposing a tax on unimproved land, and reserving for Government purposes a strip of land round the coast, had better stand over for the present. If you consider it advisable you may discuss the proposals with the owners of the land and let me know what their feelings are. I judge from your letter, however, that so far as Makea is concerned, you know her attitude is antagonistic.

No. 64.

I have, &c.,

The Resident Commissioner, Rarotonga.

C. H. MILLS.

No. 92.

SIR,—

Niue, 28th October, 1904.

I have the honour to forward you herewith, for transmission to His Excellency the Governor, three Niue Island Ordinances, which were duly passed this day by the Niue Island Council. They are as follows: Ordinance No. 4, "The Niue Island Marriage and Registration Ordinance, 1904." Ordinance No. 12, "The Niue Island Traders' License Ordinance, 1904." Ordinance No. 14, "The Niue Island Emigration Ordinance 1903 Amendment Ordinance, 1904."

I have deleted the clauses relating to divorce from Ordinance No. 4, in accordance with the suggestion of the Solicitor-General. No other alteration has been made.

The clause relating to liquor licenses has been expunged from Ordinance No. 12, and the traders' license fees fixed in accordance with your views by imposing a fee of £2 10s. for every branch store.

Ordinance No. 14 is a new Ordinance, and will, I think, meet all the requirements of the labour traffic. The Natives are very pleased with it, as it provides for the production of accounts and payment of balance of wages in Niue. Complaints have often been made to me by returned labourers from Malden that they had been unfairly treated in the matter of accounts and deductions from their wages, but I could do nothing. If this Ordinance is assented to by His Excellency the Governor, I will have copies printed and sent to the firms in the habit of recruiting labour here. Even though it should deter them from recruiting labour here, no harm will result, for a cessation of recruiting for two or three years would be beneficial to this island.

I have, &c.,

C. F. MAXWELL,

The Hon. C. H. Mills, Wellington.

Resident Commissioner, Niue.