

Enclosure.

SIR,—

Government Schooner Department, Rarotonga, 9th August, 1905.

I have the honour to report the return from Malden Island of thirty-three Cook-Islanders (thirteen Aitutakians, seven Rarotongans, and thirteen Mangaiaans), being the majority of the labour party which proceeded to Malden Island under engagement to Messrs. Grice, Sumner, and Co. in the month of August last year. The men were sent away from Malden Island some five weeks before the expiry of their twelvemonths' engagement owing to the fact that the stock of provisions at that island was shortened by reason of the crews of two vessels wrecked at Malden Island in May last being on the island for some weeks before they were taken off by a passing vessel.

The wages earned by the returned men amount to about the sum of £720, of which they received £320 in cash, the balance going for the most part in the purchase of corrugated roofing-iron and building-timber ordered by the men through Messrs. Grice, Sumner, and Co. This timber and iron is purchased in Auckland by Messrs. Grice, Sumner, and Co., and is forwarded by the "Countess of Ranfurly," to be delivered to the men at their various islands.

The returned men speak in the highest terms of the treatment they received at Malden Island under Mr. Karlson, who was appointed manager about twelve months ago, and many of them have expressed a desire to return to Malden whenever a party is again to be sent from the Cook Islands.

The Resident Commissioner.

I have, &c.,

E. BLAINE, Secretary.

No. 36.

SIR,—

Cook and other Islands Administration, Wellington, 14th August, 1905.

Referring to your letter of the 20th August last, on the subject of the steamer-service to the Cook Islands, I have now to inform you that the accommodation-house at Rarotonga is completed, and will be opened about the beginning of next month. I shall be glad, therefore, to hear whether your company can see its way to take any steps towards establishing a fortnightly service from New Zealand to Rarotonga—for a few months' trial if not as a permanent arrangement—and on what terms the additional steamer can be run.

I have, &c.,

C. H. MILLS.

The Managing Director,

Union Steamship Company of New Zealand (Limited), Dunedin.

No. 37.

SIR,—

Rarotonga, Cook Islands, 15th August, 1905.

In reply to your letter No. 212, of the 4th instant, I have the honour to suggest that the lagoons of Penrhyn and Manihiki should be proclaimed under section 15 of "The Cook and other Islands Government Act, 1901," subject to the provisions of section 4 of the amending Act of 1904.

I do not think that further action than the Proclamation will be needed just now, for the price of shell is so low at present that the industry barely pays, and will bear no restraint. It may, however, be as well to appoint me to administer the reserves.

I have, &c.,

W. E. GUDGEON,

Resident Commissioner.

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

No. 38.

SIR,—

Rarotonga, Cook Islands, 15th August, 1905.

In reply to your letter of the 4th instant, No. 210, I have the honour to inform you that draft regulations were forwarded in No. 86, of the 4th July last.

In all cases where land has been taken we are paying the rent provided for in the lease to the owners thereof, and it is a system that I think it would be well to continue, though the Court must decide the compensation payable, either at the termination of the lease or on the request of either party to the transaction.

The compensation payable must be awarded on the present values.

I have, &c.,

W. E. GUDGEON,

Resident Commissioner.

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