

No. 55.

SIR,— Cook and other Islands Administration, Wellington, 30th August, 1905.

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 21st July, reporting on the work done by the Land Titles Court in Rarotonga during the quarter ending the 30th June last, which I consider most satisfactory. I note that the Court purposes dealing with the Islands of Mauke, Takutea, and Rakahanga before resuming work on Makea's lands in the summer. No. 25.

I have, &c.,

The Resident Commissioner, Rarotonga.

C. H. MILLS.

No. 56.

SIR,— Cook and other Islands Administration, Wellington, 30th August, 1905.

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 20th July, relative to making provision for European settlement in the Cook Islands. No. 24.

Your suggestion that the Government should lease all the available land for terms of not less than fifty years, and sublease to European settlers, is one which I am disposed to consider favourably. It will be necessary, however, to obtain legislative authority in order to give proper effect to the proposal. I am unable to promise that anything will be done this session; but I would like you to send me by return mail, if possible, an outline of the provisions you think necessary to institute a workable and effective scheme. The provisions of your Land Act will have to be borne in mind, as it may be deemed advisable to exempt leases to the Crown from some of the conditions governing ordinary leases, and provision will have to be made accordingly in any new enactment dealing with the matter. Please let me have full particulars of your proposal. The question is a large one, and whatever action is taken will have to be carefully considered. I would like you to say also whether you think the scheme in its general application will meet with favour among the people of the islands, or otherwise.

I have, &c.,

The Resident Commissioner, Rarotonga.

C. H. MILLS.

No. 57.

SIR,— Cook and other Islands Administration, Wellington, 31st August, 1905.

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 89, of the 18th July, with reference to the ownership of land in Rarotonga. No. 22.

I take it that the view which you hold as to the rights of the smaller people, and which you are having recognised in the proceedings of the Land Titles Court, is in keeping with the old customs of the island, although not with the practices of late years. Is this so, or is the contention that the occupiers of the land "have an inalienable right to a certain portion of the land subject to the rights of the overlord" rather your own view of the equity of the position as you find it at the present time? I am quite satisfied it is the correct view, but would like to know whether it is part of the original polity of the island or a recent development of it.

I am very much pleased at the changed attitude Makea is adopting in this matter, and I think you are to be congratulated on the good work that is being done by the Land Titles Court.

I have, &c.,

The Resident Commissioner, Rarotonga.

C. H. MILLS.

No. 58.

SIR,— Rarotonga, Cook Islands, 1st September, 1905.

I have the honour to forward enclosed a draft notice taking the following roads within the Island of Rarotonga: (1) The Victoria Road, (2) the Takuvaine Valley Road, (3) the Ara Metua (Ancient) Road, (4) the Avatiu Valley Road.

Nos. 1, 2, and 4 have been formed and metalled, and are used by carts bringing produce to the port. I have therefore the honour to request that you will submit the draft for the approval of His Excellency the Governor.

I have, &c.,

W. E. GUDGEON,

Resident Commissioner.

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

No. 59.

SIR,— Rarotonga, Cook Islands, 11th September, 1905.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of notices taking land for landing-place and road at Atiu and a road at Mangaia. No. 52.

These notices will be gazetted at once.

I have, &c.,

W. E. GUDGEON,

Resident Commissioner.

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