

No. 96.

SIR,—

Rarotonga, Cook Islands, 1st December, 1905.

I have the honour to forward herewith Notices for the signature of His Excellency, taking the following sites for Government purposes:—

Omoka, Island of Penrhyn, a residence-site for Resident Agent; land given by the people of Omoka.

Tukao, Manihiki, the site of the Courthouse, used as such for the last sixty years.

Tauhunu, Manihiki, Courthouse-site, used as such for sixty years.

Landing-place taken with the approval and at the request of all the people.

Flagstaff Reserve, Tauhunu, taken at the request of the people to secure the right to keep a signal-staff thereon.

Rakahanga Council House and Courthouse site, taken at the request of the people, this piece of land being used for that purpose even before the arrival of the Mission in the island.

I have, &c.,

W. E. GUDGEON,

Resident Commissioner.

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

No. 97.

SIR,—

Rarotonga, Cook Islands, 8th December, 1905.

I have the honour to inform you that a public meeting was held in the Courthouse, Avarua, on the 5th instant, to consider a proposition by the Union Company to run a second steamer between Wellington and Rarotonga during the orange season.

The agent put the matter very fairly before the meeting, but the fruit-growers of the island, with two exceptions, simply refused to entertain the proposition. It seems to me that the planters of this island have behaved with but little wisdom. They were not asked to guarantee anything, but simply to provide cargo for the steamer, and I think might have opened up a profitable direct trade with the west coast of the Middle Island, besides placing the fruit for Otago and Canterbury in good condition on those markets.

It is not easy to indicate the reasons that guided the opponents of the measure, but those given out to the public are as follows:—

First, that it is ridiculous to suppose that the Union Steamship Company wanted to help the shippers of fruit, since they have already shown that they have no intention of so doing. The people have asked that the steamer should make a trip early in January, as there would be at least 500 tons of pines and bananas at that time. The only firm that would seem to have opposed this apparently has more power than all the remaining population of the islands, and the steamer will not come here.

Second, a remark made by the agent that if the second steamer came on the trade the fruit-shippers would be expected to send all their southern fruit by that steamer: If the company were to make a point of this, then the chief use of the steamer would be removed, for men shipping from here could only send one lot of fruit a month to the south, while a firm with its headquarters in Auckland could swamp the southern market before the second boat could reach Wellington.

Third, there is a very strong feeling that too much fruit is already shipped to New Zealand, and that further shipments should be discouraged.

I have, &c.,

W. E. GUDGEON,

Resident Commissioner.

The Minister administering the Islands, Wellington.

No. 98.

SIR,—

Niue Island Administration, Niue, 12th December, 1905.

Replying further to your letter No. 237, dated the 23rd August, 1905, regarding education Nos. 48 and 70. in Niue, I have the honour to state that I find there is difficulty in obtaining a suitable site for a schoolhouse and teacher's residence here. In any case, assuming that a site were available, the cost of the buildings, &c., would amount to several hundreds of pounds, and many months must elapse before they could be completed.

I am desirous of obtaining the services of a trained teacher as soon as possible, so that a school may be established. To do this it appears to me that the easiest way would be to utilise the mission schoolhouse for the present, and I have asked the Rev. F. E. Lawes to guarantee the use of the mission schoolhouse at Alofi, and beg to enclose his letter in reply for your consideration.