

No. 142.

SIR,—

Cook and other Islands Administration, Wellington, 17th February, 1906.

I have to inform you that Cabinet has approved of the inspection of fruit at the islands, and has decided to appoint Mr. Percy Brown as Inspector. His salary will be £100 per annum, which will be paid by this Government, but Cabinet directs that the buildings necessary for the inspection and fumigation of fruit shall be erected by your Government. The duty of the Inspector will be to examine all fruit, plants, &c., imported into the Cook Islands, whether for use in Rarotonga or for distribution to the other islands of the Group. This is in accordance with the suggestion made by Mr. T. W. Kirk in his report on the horticulture of the islands, and the object is to prevent the introduction and spread of fresh diseases. Also (b) to inspect, and, if necessary, fumigate, all fruit exported from Rarotonga to this colony. So far as the fruit from the adjacent islands is concerned, I do not see that anything can be done at present, unless it can be brought to Rarotonga for shipment.

Nothing further has been done in the direction of establishing a Government plantation at Rarotonga, with experimental ground and nurseries attached, as proposed by Mr. Kirk, but I wish such a step to be kept in view, and in the meantime we will ascertain what benefit is to be derived from the inspection of your fruit prior to shipment to New Zealand.

Cabinet has also decided that the schooner "Countess of Ranfurly" be run direct to Wellington for, say, two trips, in order to test the market here.

Kindly have these decisions given effect to as far as possible. It will be necessary to examine the fruit not only for scale, but also for any signs of the maggot, otherwise it may develop during the voyage and cause the fruit to be condemned.

The Resident Commissioner, Rarotonga.

I have, &c.,

C. H. MILLS.

No. 143.

Wellington, 20th February, 1906.

(Telegram.) Colonel Gudgeon, Rarotonga, post Auckland.

No. 135.

VERY SORRY to hear of the death of Pa Ariki. It will be a distinct loss to the islands. Please convey to relatives and people my regret at their loss, and my appreciation of the high character of the late Ariki, and the assistance he always rendered to the Government in all matters making for the welfare of the Group.

C. H. MILLS.

No. 144.

SIR,—

Rarotonga, Cook Islands, 24th February, 1906.

I have the honour to inform you that, the people of Takitumu having selected Te Tianui, wife of Makea Daniela, as their Ariki in the place of Pa Maretu, deceased, I attended the ceremony of installation at Ngatangia on the 24th, and gave the formal consent of the Government to the selection of the people.

In this case the people have made a very good choice, for not only is Te Tianui the elder descendant of the old line of the Pa family from Tai-teariki, but she is a woman of excellent character. I have, however, informed her that there will be no Ariki's Court in the future at Takitumu, and that I am prepared to take all the cases in that district.

I have, &c.,

W. E. GUDGEON,

Resident Commissioner.

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

No. 145.

SIR,—

Rarotonga, Cook Islands, 1st March, 1906.

No. 142.

In reply to your letter No. 69, of the 17th ultimo, I have the honour to report that I have communicated with Mr. Brown, who will probably accept the post offered to him.

So far, I may say that he sees many difficulties in the way of making the fruit-inspection at this port a success.

1. I would point out that there is no law here that will compel any man to have his fruit fumigated whether he likes it or not. I have therefore the honour to submit for your consideration that such a law is necessary, and if not passed it will result in half the fruit being fumigated and the other half having to be picked out on the Auckland wharf, whereby all the benefit of fumigation will be lost.

2. There can be no benefit to the growers at Rarotonga unless the certificate of the officer at this place be accepted as final whenever fumigation has taken place.

3. It is with the greatest difficulty that shippers succeed in getting in their fruit in time to ship by the steamer even under present circumstances, the same wagon working continuously for forty-eight hours. If, therefore, the fumigation is to be a success, a very large shed must be erected