

capable of taking five thousand cases. In fact, there should be two sheds of that capacity each, so as to avoid the overhandling of the fruit. This will be a very expensive work to undertake in aid of an export that is not worth having. I would point out that at least ten men will have to be employed on the work for four days in each month.

The fruit from the outlying islands cannot possibly be dealt with here. No shipper will permit transshipments and delays on a cargo that he will almost certainly lose money on. This, however, will not matter greatly, as the oranges of Aitutaki, Atiu, Mauke, and Mitiaro are comparatively clean, having had no direct communication with New Zealand, from which place all our pests were brought by the medium of old cases which were at one time reshipped to this island.

I will await Mr. Kirk's suggestions before I send in an estimate of the cost of fumigating-chamber. The most economical method will be to utilise part of the sheds of the Union Company, but this would cost not less than £500, and I submit that the oranges of this island are really not worth the work.

I have, &c.,

W. E. GUDGEON,

Resident Commissioner.

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

No. 146.

SIR,—

Rarotonga, Cook Islands, 1st March, 1906.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 61, of the 15th ultimo, with reference to the proposed census of these islands for the present year. No. 138.

Mr. Percy Brown informs me that he is prepared to undertake the work under the remuneration offered. I have already secured a census of the Island of Mangaia, and I think that on this occasion it will be as well to bring the whole census of these islands into line with that of Mangaia, in which the whole population is divided into male, female, adults, and children, all those below the age of eighteen being counted as children.

As for religion, except at Mauke and a few in Rarotonga, the whole of the people are London Mission, and except in Rarotonga, where there are perhaps twenty employed as clerks or storemen, the whole of the people are planters. Therefore we will attend to the matter of occupation in Rarotonga only.

I may say that in consequence of the poll-tax inflicted on the Tahiti people by the Government of that place, the people are very suspicious of the census, and there would be no possibility of obtaining a second census of that island.

I think that if we can obtain a fairly correct census of all the islands in a simple form we shall do all that is possible. I hope to obtain the returns from Manihiki, Rakahanga, Aitutaki, and Atiu shortly, but Penrhyn I cannot get until June. Mauke and Mitiaro I shall probably have to take in person; Palmerston I shall get in June.

I do not see how Mr. Brown can include Niue in his return, and I would suggest that you instruct Mr. Maxwell to supply the necessary information from that place.

I have, &c.,

W. E. GUDGEON,

Resident Commissioner.

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

No. 147.

SIR,—

Rarotonga, Cook Islands, 2nd March, 1906.

In reply to your letter No. 54, of the 13th ultimo, I have the honour to inform you that the flags of Rarotonga and the Cook Islands Federation are correctly depicted on the plates forwarded by His Excellency. These are the only flags known to the islands within the boundaries of Great Britain in the eastern Pacific. I cannot say that there is any reason why they should be retained, but there is a certain amount of sentiment in favour of the Rarotonga flag, inasmuch as it was the flag of Makea and was in existence some years before the establishment of the protectorate. I would therefore suggest that it be retained for the present. No. 137.

I may add that I use the blue ensign over the Government Offices, not the local flags.

I have, &c.,

W. E. GUDGEON,

Resident Commissioner.

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

No. 148.

SIR,—

Rarotonga, Cook Islands, 3rd March, 1906.

In reply to your letter No. 56, of the 16th February, I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of forms of regulations under section 28 of the Licensing Acts Amendment Act of 1904. These regulations appear to be most suitable, and in accordance with the spirit of the Act. No. 140.

In all matters connected with the sale of alcoholic liquor the strictest interpretation is given, and we have always held that the words "spirituous liquors" include fermented liquor of any description.

I have, &c.,

W. E. GUDGEON,

Resident Commissioner.

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