

that they should get no profit for the services they may render to the Natives by the purchase of the Natives' produce and its sale elsewhere?

Mr. PLATTS: They can buy as much fruit as they like.

Mr. YOUNG: Is it your policy to exercise the great powers which you have so as to absolutely destroy the trading rights and opportunities of the trader? You have indicated that you wanted to destroy the trader as a trader in island produce?

Mr. PLATTS: I have not indicated anything of the kind.

Mr. YOUNG: You said you wanted him to be satisfied with one profit only—the profit from the sale of goods to the Natives—and you objected to his making any profit by any other means?

Mr. PLATTS: No, I did not say that. I object to your putting words into my mouth. You quite misconceive what I said and what I mean. I have no such power as you think. I have no power to interfere with trade at all. I have not interfered with trade at all. The Natives came to me and asked for Government assistance. When I say I suggest to the traders that they should be satisfied with one profit, I mean that they should; but if they are not satisfied I have no power whatever to interfere with them in any way. The Natives say that if the traders will give them a fair price for their fruit they will sell them their fruit. I shall be very glad indeed to see them sell it to them. I take no part in the fixation of the price of food. I have never interfered in the disputes between the traders and the Natives. When the Natives came to me and said, "We want your interference to get cases for us," and I approached the traders, that is the only interference that has taken place. I have never said to the Natives, "Do not sell to the traders." I merely stay here, and if there is a conflict between the Natives and the traders as a body, I feel bound to help the Natives.

Hon. Sir JAMES ALLEN: May I say, on behalf of the Government, that the Government would not allow any such thing to prevail. Mr. Platts has certain rights and duties. The Government will not allow interference with proper trade. They will leave it an open thing to the white trader, and they will also permit the Native trader to trade if he can make arrangements to do so. As I understand it, they are trading now. It is an open field for trader and Native.

Mr. YOUNG (to Mr. Platts): Do you object to the trader making a profit on the service he renders to the Natives?

Mr. PLATTS: Certainly not. I would be only too glad to see Natives and traders pulling together, but where their interests as a body conflict and they appeal to me for assistance, I consider it my duty to give the assistance.

Mr. HARRIS: If the Natives came to you, Mr. Platts, with a grievance and obviously they were in the wrong, would you still think it your duty to take the part of the Natives as against the Europeans?

Mr. PLATTS: No, certainly not.

Mr. HOLLAND: I should like to say to all the different elements here that I for one want to get the viewpoint of every section, as far as we can get it in the very short time at our disposal. I do not want to prolong the proceedings this afternoon. If any of the elements have any information to offer the members of the Labour party we will be pleased to have it. We are desirous of bringing together all the conflicting elements in order that there may be harmony in the islands.

Hon. Sir JAMES ALLEN: I am glad to hear it. But we have been here in open meeting hearing evidence from all sides, and I do not think it advisable that evidence should be conveyed to individual members of Parliament which has not been produced to us.

Mr. HOLLAND: I had the distinct promise of the Prime Minister that no restriction whatever should be placed in the way of my getting information.

Hon. Sir JAMES ALLEN: None whatever will be.

Mr. HOLLAND: And I want to get it independently of official sources.

Hon. Sir JAMES ALLEN: I want everybody to get it.

RAROTONGA, 27TH FEBRUARY, 1920.

FURTHER MEETING WITH ISLAND COUNCIL.

*Present:* Hon. Sir James Allen (Minister of External Affairs) and members of the Parliamentary Party; Mr. F. W. Platts (Resident Commissioner); Arikis and Mataiapos.

PAARO: We are very pleased to meet you again. There was something discussed between us yesterday and we have thought it over. The matter has been discussed well, and we now put it before you and ask you to be generous in considering it.

[Letter written in Maori handed in. Translation by interpreter, Mr. Savage, follows.]

Rarotonga, 26th February, 1920.

To the Minister and the Members of Parliament.

GREETINGS to you all. This is our mind—the mind of the Arikis, and all the Mataiapos, and all the Rangatiras—which we disclose to you: it is our decision to you the Minister and the members of Parliament.

1. About the Council member (Rarotonga): For the future let the members be elected. The present Maori members remain in office. We wish to say this here: Our previous members who held office failed us; they never informed us what they did at the Council meetings, nor did they ever ask us to meet them to ascertain our mind or wishes.

2. About a European (white) member: We agree to one white member being elected, but he must be a full-blood white man—he must not be a half-caste Maori; and the European community alone must elect him—one member only; and he shall sit to represent the whites only; he shall not have any mana (power, or say, or jurisdiction) over our Maori affairs.