

In reply to a question from one of the traders, Mr. COOPER stated that the prices he posted up on the notice-board were obtained from Rarotonga. He had done his best to arrange for this information after the trouble of last year. It had been suggested that there was no definite information as to whether the prices he posted up were gross or not. He would see that in the future there was no doubt on this point. He had just received an offer of £35 a ton f.o.b. Rarotonga for copra.

The Hon. Sir JAMES ALLEN, in reply, said that so far as trade was concerned Mr. Low had put the position very clearly before the visitors. A Trade Commission was accompanying the party, and he invited the traders to place their views on record before them. The Commissioners had authority to take evidence on oath, and anything put forward would be recorded in the report that the Commission would submit to the Government.

NIUE, 2ND MARCH, 1920.

MEETING WITH THE ISLAND COUNCIL.

Present: Hon. Sir James Allen (Minister of External Affairs) and members of the Parliamentary Party; Mr. Morris (Resident Commissioner); members of Island Council.

The Council, which consisted of ten members, was introduced by the Resident Commissioner, and the interpreting was conducted by Mr. Head.

In introducing the Councillors Mr. MORRIS informed them that Sir James Allen had succeeded Hon. Dr. Pomare as Minister in Charge of the Islands. He told them that in meeting the Parliamentary Party they had an opportunity of speaking with absolute freedom, and he urged them to bring forward whatever they wished. It was an excellent chance for them to state any grievances, but if, on the other hand, they were satisfied with the condition of things they should not refrain from saying so.

VILA, the Councillor for the village of Tuafa, on behalf of the Island Council and the village he represented, welcomed Sir James Allen and the members of Parliament on their visit, and thanked them.

HAMO, Councillor for Alofi, also extended a welcome to the visitors, whom they were all very pleased to see. Dr. Pomare had done good work on the island in the way of education and other matters, and had sent them a new Commissioner, Mr. Morris, who had given very great satisfaction. Mr. Morris had been very energetic, and had helped the cause of the Natives. The speaker also thanked the Minister for sending the new doctor. A doctor was very necessary to look after the sick of the island, and he asked that they might always get the best medical attention possible. A proper medical service they knew was expensive, but they asked New Zealand to help in this matter. They had had different Commissioners at different times who had introduced different laws. Did they carry on like that in New Zealand, or was it that such treatment was meted out to Niue only? Some of the laws were burdensome to the people. The Customs duties on all imported goods were very heavy. The people of the island were poor, and it was considered the duties should be lighter than in New Zealand, where the people were better off. New Zealand should help them more; it should spend more money upon the island and not depend upon the local revenues only. On the occasion of his visit to Niue the late Mr. Seddon had promised them all sorts of things if they would become affiliated to New Zealand. They were not a very well educated people, and the New-Zealanders knew better than they did what the island was worth. They had asked that the Native President of the Council should be retained. A letter had been sent to New Zealand on the subject, and the reply received had informed them that under the present law the Resident Commissioner had been appointed President. It was considered that the people of the island should make their own laws to suit local land conditions under the guidance of the Minister.

UEA, the second Councillor for Alofi, who had been chaplain to the Niuean Contingent, referred to the visit of Lord Ranfurly on the occasion of the annexation of the island. There was a feeling amongst the islanders that the promises made at that time had not been fulfilled. The same feeling also prevailed with regard to the visit of the late Mr. Seddon. The islanders had been against affiliation, but Lord Ranfurly had said he represented the Queen and he had affiliated the island to New Zealand. He, the speaker, expected they would get just the same treatment on the present occasion: the Europeans would simply hear what they had to say and then go away and think nothing more about it. At the same time he hoped Niue would not be treated like that. As Dr. Pomare had left them he hoped they would get good treatment from his successor. He hoped also that the members of Parliament would visit Niue once a year. There were two things that the people on the island felt very strongly about. Their forefathers had been dead against liquor and the sale of Native land. Those laws were still being maintained at the present time. The present land laws enacted by New Zealand provided that the land should be surveyed and apportioned off. If then a tribe became extinct the land would revert to the Crown. Under the law the Natives were not allowed to will their properties. Property descended equally to all the members of a family. This did not suit the Natives. They should be allowed to make their own laws in this matter and to will their properties as they liked. Moreover, the islanders did not wish to have the land surveyed. They had always carried on their own affairs with regard to land, and there had been no trouble. He wished to refer to the mana of the chiefs. There were still chiefs on the islands, but they had no authority. The new condition of things had caused this. In European countries this kind of thing had been