

The shoes used are chiefly canvas. The custom of wearing boots and shoes is growing among the natives.

Cotton prints must, above all things, be of "fast" colours. That is the first condition, and one not to be neglected. Native methods of washing, and exposure to the sun, try them severely.

Silk dresses are getting into use among the Natives. A considerable quantity has been lately sold in Rarotonga. The price is 3s. to 3s. 6d. per yard. This silk is imported from Tahiti. Ostrich-feathers (for which as much as two guineas are sometimes paid) and artificial flowers are a good deal used, and imported chiefly from Tahiti.

Buggies and other vehicles are sometimes made of very good quality in Rarotonga, but are chiefly imported from California *via* Tahiti.

The lumber used is becoming almost exclusively Californian—either redwood or pine. Kauri complained of as shrinking too much. Shingles and picket-palings of redwood are preferred. Long lengths of timber, it is said, can also be obtained at lower prices from California.

For sugar the demand is considerable in all the islands. Much of the white sugar used in Rarotonga comes *via* Tahiti from California.

In soap, New Zealand ought to beat California, from which at present some supplies of fair quality come.

The importing firms in Rarotonga are: New Zealand—Donald and Edenborough, Goodwin and De Lisle, and the South Pacific Trading Company; Tahiti—Société Commerciale de l'Océanie (a Hamburg company with its head-quarters at Tahiti), and W. Taylor; San Francisco—Crawford and Co., and E. Piltz.

Exports of the Cook Islands.

Coffee is the staple. With proper cultivation the quantity could be increased eight- or ten-fold. The quality is excellent, but the coffee is carelessly picked, not properly sorted, and sold too new. The chief markets are San Francisco and Melbourne. I am told that it costs only £2 16s. per ton to send coffee from Rarotonga to San Francisco *via* Tahiti, but £5 10s. to send it *via* Auckland. The Melbourne market must be better reached through New Zealand.

Oranges and other fruits, lime-juice, arrowroot, &c., I have already referred to. There ought to be a large market, especially for oranges, in the southern parts of New Zealand. A glance at the map will show that Rarotonga must sooner or later be recognised as the nearest tropical country from which a direct supply can be obtained, and with which south New Zealand can be connected.

Copra and cotton will also be staples, but are not likely to increase to any great extent.

The trade with Rarotonga is not alone to be regarded: the Cook Islands are but a link in the chain that should bind to New Zealand the splendid archipelagoes of the eastern Pacific. With all those of the central Pacific, and to some extent with those in the west, her commerce is already extensive. There is no reason why the trade with the eastern Pacific should not add very greatly to that which she already possesses, and which her position and products fit her so well to maintain.

Rarotonga, 17th December, 1891.

FREDERICK J. MOSS.

No. 10.

Mr. F. J. Moss to His Excellency the GOVERNOR.

(No. 27/91.)

MY LORD,—

British Residency, Rarotonga, 19th December, 1891.

I have to-day received the enclosed petition to your Excellency from the Chamber of Commerce in Rarotonga, asking that the foreign residents in the Cook Islands should be granted direct representation in the Federal Parliament.

I have already addressed your Excellency on this subject in my despatch of the 17th instant (No. 25). The five gentlemen who, as "merchants and importers," began with me on the 4th December the correspondence therein referred to, suddenly, in the course of that correspondence, wrote to inform me that they had constituted themselves a Chamber of Commerce. The petition now sent is only signed by the same five business firms, and I believe that they still constitute the only members of the Chamber of Commerce in whose name they write.

It has always been my practice to communicate with all the foreign residents, including the members of the present Chamber of Commerce, whenever their interests are directly affected. The Import Duty Act (No. 2), exempting certain articles from duty, was passed at their suggestion. The Awarua Au (District Government) proposed to charge business licenses towards the payment of Courts, police, &c., and I convened a meeting of the foreign residents of Awarua to consider the proposal. On their objection I advised that the charge should not be levied, to which the Au at once agreed. I mention these cases in illustration.

No application for representation has been made by the foreign residents either to Makea (the chief of the Executive) or to Parliament. As far as I have been able to learn, such representation would be objected to almost unanimously—and probably quite unanimously—as likely to cause much mischief, and impede the growth of this young Government. In this opinion I quite concur.

I have, &c.,

His Excellency the Earl of Onslow, G.C.M.G.,
Governor of New Zealand, &c.

FREDERICK J. MOSS,
British Resident.

Enclosure.

Chamber of Commerce, Rarotonga, 18th December, 1891.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR LORDSHIP,—

We, the undersigned members of the Chamber of Commerce, would most respectfully ask your Lordship's permission to draw your attention to the following subject, which we deem is of