

The coffee, on the contrary, shows every sign of being one of the best crops that this island has produced, but I am told that the price per pound will be very low, in consequence of the greediness and short-sighted policy of the Maori planters, who not only gather and sell coffee that has fallen from the trees and been allowed to lie on the hot moist soil for some days, but they also allow themselves and their freedom of trade to be governed by certain Maori committees called the "Au," who fondly suppose that they can fix the prices of produce sold in Rarotonga, and who will not allow the people to sell unless at the price they have fixed. The result of this policy is that the berries are stored until they are more or less mildewed. These circumstances have combined to give Rarotongan coffee an evil name in foreign markets, and, as a natural result, the Maori producer suffers from the misconduct of those whom he allows to govern him.

As I have not yet visited the other islands of this group, I am unable to report upon their trade prospects; but, as to Rarotonga, I can say that not more than half of the island is beneficially occupied by the owners. I am of opinion that nearly 10,000 acres might well be leased to either Maoris or European settlers. The Maori is, however, very jealous of his land, and it is, as a rule, a fact that the better class of chiefs regard the land as being held by them in trust for their people, and therefore they lease only small pieces of land in the neighbourhood of a port; whereas the drunken or grasping man will turn out the whole of his people, and lease to any man who will give him money.

Whether European settlers would prove to be satisfactory in a tropical island, such as Rarotonga, is doubtful. Each man would undoubtedly require a capital of from £300 to £500, and would then have only a small piece of land. But, as a mere matter of justice to the Maori people, it would be necessary to see that landless Maoris were provided for before the chiefs were allowed to lease land in any quantity to Europeans, for it is certain that whatever measure of justice the common people may receive will not come spontaneously from their own chiefs; it must be forced from them by pressure from without the island.

W. E. GUDGEON, British Resident.

TABLE I.—REPORT of SHIPPING at the PORT of RAROTONGA (Cook Islands) for the Year ending 31st December, 1898.

	Inwards.								Outwards.							
	Sailing.		Steam.		Men-of-war.		Total.		Sailing.		Steam.		Men-of-war.		Total.	
	No.	Tons.	No.	Tons.	No.	Tons.	No.	Tons.	No.	Tons.	No.	Tons.	No.	Tons.	No.	Tons.
H.M.S. "Royalist" ..	..	..	..	..	1	1,420	1	1,420	..	..	..	..	1	1,420	1	1,420
H.M.S. "Tauranga" ..	..	..	..	..	1	2,573	1	2,573	..	..	..	..	1	2,573	1	2,573
British ..	19	1,520	27	30,275	..	..	46	31,795	16	1,330	29	31,766	..	..	45	33,096
Native ..	42	1,946	..	..	..	..	42	1,946	41	1,922	..	..	..	..	41	1,922
Totals 1898 ..	61	3,466	27	30,275	2	3,993	90	37,734	57	3,252	29	31,766	2	3,993	88	39,011
" 1897 ..	58	2,809	28	29,238	2	1,765	88	33,812	60	3,550	28	29,238	2	1,765	90	34,553
" 1896 ..	60	4,607	46	30,538	2	1,610	108	36,755	63	4,941	46	30,538	2	1,610	111	37,089
" 1895 ..	65	4,524	27	17,416	..	..	92	21,940	64	4,410	27	17,416	..	..	91	21,826
" 1894 ..	57	3,510	23	14,628	2	2,161	82	20,299	56	3,432	23	14,628	2	2,161	81	20,221

TABLE II.—EXPORTS from the COOK ISLANDS for the Year ending 31st December, 1898.

	To New Zealand.			To Tahiti.			Total.		
	Quantity.	Value.		Quantity.	Value.		Quantity.	Value.	
Produce of Cook Islands—		£	s. d.		£	s. d.		£	s. d.
Coffee, lb. ...	74,051	1,530	17 9	35,233	858	6 6	109,284	2,389	4 3
Copra, lb. ...	1,101,331	4,327	10 7	49,877	178	2 8	1,151,208	4,505	13 3
Cotton, lb. ...	12,333	195	6 8	655*	2	14 7	12,988	198	1 3
Limejuice, gals. ...	13,509	267	11 5	..	..	..	13,509	267	11 5
Oranges, cases ...	21,562	3,384	4 4	..	..	..	21,562	3,384	4 4
Fungus, lb. ...	160	0	13 4	..	..	..	160	0	13 4
Cocoanuts, No. ...	32,150	56	13 6	..	..	..	32,150	56	13 6
Bananas, bunches ...	4,956	238	16 0	..	..	..	4,956	238	16 0
Pineapples, cases ...	685	101	17 4	..	..	..	685	101	17 4
Sundry articles ...	..	61	10 11	..	4	13 4	..	66	4 3
Total, Cook Islands ...	..	10,165	1 10	..	1,043	17 1	..	11,208	18 11
Produce received and shipped from Penrhyn, &c.—									
Copra, lb. ...	90,214	348	14 0	..	..	..	90,218	348	14 0
Pearl-shell, lb. ...	29,258	930	19 2	..	..	..	29,258	930	19 2
Fungus, lb. ...	2,162	22	16 0	..	..	..	2,162	22	16 0
Sundries ...	..	106	5 6	..	..	..	..	106	5 6
Total ...	..	1,408	14 8	..	..	..	..	1,408	14 8

* Seed.