

No. 8.

Lieut.-Colonel GUDGEON to His Excellency the GOVERNOR.

MY LORD,—

British Residency, Rarotonga, 10th May, 1900.

I have the honour to report that the missionary barque "John Williams" arrived at Rarotonga on the 6th instant from Sydney, but was not allowed to land her cargo nor communicate with the shore in any way. The captain reports that three of the passengers died within a week after leaving Sydney, and is of opinion that they died of bronchitis. This, however, may or may not be true, for the ship does not carry a doctor, and Captain Wirell has no medical knowledge.

I have further to inform your Lordship that some time previous to the arrival of the "John Williams" I had called a meeting of the Federal Government to decide what measures should be taken to prevent the introduction of the bubonic plague, and the Council resolved that the matter should be placed in the hands of the British Resident and the Health Officer (Dr. W. B. Craig), with full power to do all things necessary to prevent the introduction of any disease whatsoever. We have therefore resolved that no vessel from Sydney shall be allowed to land goods or passengers at any island of this group unless the said vessel shall have come *via* New Zealand, and have obtained a clean bill of health from that place.

I have also to report, for your Lordship's information, that I thought it advisable to warn Captain Wirell not to call at the islands lying north and west of this group—viz., Niue, Penrhyn, Manihiki, Rakaanga, and Pukapuka—they being under the protection of the British flag.

I have, &c.,

W. E. GUDGEON,

British Resident.

His Excellency the Earl of Ranfurly, K.C.M.G.,
Governor of New Zealand.

No. 9.

Lieut.-Colonel GUDGEON to His Excellency the GOVERNOR.

MY LORD,—

British Residency, Rarotonga, 11th June, 1900.

The Hon. the Premier of New Zealand, during his recent visit to the Cook Islands, has expressed his willingness to assist the Federal Governor with money, to the end that an auxiliary oil-engine schooner may be purchased, as a tender to bring the outlying islands into touch with the Union Company's boats.

The conditions laid down by the Premier are as follows: That interest at the rate of 5 per cent. per annum shall be paid on the money advanced; that a sinking fund shall be provided to pay off the advance; that the schooner should be insured up to her full value; and that preference shall in every instance be given to all cargo shipped to New Zealand; lastly, that a maximum scale of charges for freight and passages shall be fixed, as a guarantee that the vessel will be run in the interests of the people of the group, and not as a mere revenue-producer.

The Arikis of Rarotonga have received this offer with the utmost satisfaction, and I need hardly remind your Lordship that they are the people who will receive the least possible benefit from the arrangement; they, however, do recognise the disadvantage under which many of their compatriots suffer, and are anxious to develop the trade of these islands with New Zealand.

It will probably be found that the schooner will not at first pay working-expenses—that, in fact, it will have to work up its own trade; but I am convinced that the trade of the group will benefit greatly by the presence of a Government schooner.

There is, however, one matter that, if insisted on, would render it impossible to accept the Premier's offer, and that is the insurance. The rates charged by the New Zealand companies are simply prohibitive, for I am told that Captain Harries, of the "Torea," has to pay no less than 25 per cent. on the insurance effected over that schooner.

Under these circumstances, I have the honour to make the following proposal on behalf of the Federal Government of Rarotonga: (1.) That a schooner be built for the Federal Government, not exceeding 150 tons register, and fitted with suitable oil-engines. (2.) That the New Zealand Government should advance the money required for such schooner, and that the Government of the Cook Islands should pay at the rate of 5 per cent. per annum on all moneys so advanced. (2.) That a sinking fund shall be provided, and that the amount reserved annually for such fund shall be decided by the New Zealand Government, the Government of the Cook Islands reserving the right to pay off a greater sum in any one year than that defined by the sinking-fund clause. (4.) That this debt shall be a first charge on the revenues of the Cook Islands. (5.) That the maximum scale of freights should be as follows:—

Inter-Island.—To and from Rarotonga: For all fruit, produce, and merchandise, 12s. per ton cubic measurement or bulk. For each adult passenger to or from any island of the group, 6s., either in cash or produce at current rates; children under fourteen, half-rates.

Foreign.—To New Zealand, £1 5s. per ton on all produce and merchandise other than perishable fruits; all perishable fruits, 15s. per ton; adult passengers to New Zealand, £7; children under fourteen, half-fare.

I have, &c.,

W. E. GUDGEON,

British Resident.

His Excellency the Earl of Ranfurly, K.C.M.G.,
Governor of New Zealand.