

No. 70.

Cook and other Islands Administration,
Wellington, 21st September, 1903.

SIR,—

Since my return from the Islands I have been considering what would be the best plan to adopt with regard to obtaining a contribution from the Islands towards the cost of the schooner "Countess of Ranfurly." I realise that for the first few years it would be difficult for the Islands to make any large payments, and I have therefore had a table of annual instalments prepared (copy enclosed), taking the cost of the vessel at £6,000 (leaving out any additional sums expended on repairs, &c.), and calculating the payments on a 3-per-cent. basis, compound interest, for periods of fifteen and twenty years. You will notice that under the fifteen-years scale the Islands Administration would pay £502 12s. per annum, and under the twenty-years scale, £403 5s. 11d., and I think the Islands Administration would be able to manage one of these and keep the insurance going (some £300). When at Niue I mentioned the matter to Mr. Maxwell, and he agreed that that island ought to contribute a portion of the amount. I see no reason why the Administration of Niue should not take certain shares in the vessel and pay so much of the annual liability. Kindly give the matter full consideration, and let me know as early as possible what you think should be done, so that I can submit the proposal to Cabinet.

Colonel W. E. Gudgeon, Resident Commissioner, Rarotonga.

I have, &c.,
C. H. MILLS.

No. 71.

Cook and other Islands Administration, Wellington,
21st September, 1903.

SIR,—

Since my return from the Islands I have been considering what would be the best plan to adopt with regard to obtaining a contribution from the Islands towards the cost of the schooner "Countess of Ranfurly." I realise that during the first few years it would be difficult for the Islands to make any large payments, and I have therefore had a table of annual instalments prepared (copy enclosed), taking the cost of the vessel at £6,000 (leaving out any additional sums expended on repairs, &c.), and calculating the payments on a 3-per-cent. basis, compound interest, for periods of fifteen and twenty years. You will notice that under the fifteen-years scale the Islands Administration would pay £502 12s. per annum, and under the twenty-years scale, £403 5s. 11d. When we were conversing on the subject at Niue you said you thought it would be only right for Niue to contribute towards the purchase of the schooner. I think so, too, and am of opinion that Niue should take a certain number of shares in her. Later on, if we can arrange for another steam service from Wellington to Rarotonga and the Cook Islands, the schooner might bring all your produce and that from the other Northern Islands as far as Penrhyn down to Aitutaki, to meet the mail-steamer there, and if the present service from Auckland to Tahiti *via* Rarotonga were continued it would mean a fortnightly steamer for the Islands. Please let me know as early as possible what you think on the subject.

C. F. Maxwell, Esq., Resident Agent, Niue.

I have, &c.,
C. H. MILLS.

No. 72.

Rarotonga, 21st September, 1903.

SIR,—

As the Government schooner is now a regular trader to and from Niue, I have the honour No. 1. to request that you will apportion the amount of subsidy that Niue should pay in aid of the boat. I think that the island in question can afford £200 per annum, and I should be glad if you will instruct Mr. Maxwell to that effect.

I have, &c.,
W. E. GUDGEON.

The Hon. C. H. Mills, Minister for the Islands, Wellington.

No. 73.

Cook and other Islands Administration, Wellington,
21st September, 1903.

SIR,—

I want you to let me know by next mail what is your opinion as to the prospects of trade for a monthly steam service, leaving Wellington for Rarotonga, calling at each of the Cook Islands for any produce they may have, and then back again *via* Rarotonga to Wellington. This, in conjunction with the present monthly service from Auckland to the Islands, would mean a service every fortnight. I have been thinking, also, that the "Countess of Ranfurly" might collect the produce from Penrhyn, Manihiki, Niue, &c., and bring it down to Aitutaki, so as to further assist the trade. Kindly collect all the information you can, and send me full particulars as to whether you think there would be sufficient trade to warrant the company undertaking such a service, and, if it were initiated, what would be the prospects of success in the near future, if not immediately. If such a service could be arranged it would give a great impetus to the tourist traffic, and materially assist in developing the Islands trade at a ~~more~~ rapid rate than has been the case hitherto.

Colonel W. E. Gudgeon, Resident Commissioner, Rarotonga.

I have, &c.,
C. H. MILLS.