

No. 117.

Cook and other Islands Administration, Wellington,
17th December, 1903.

SIR,—

I am in receipt of your letter of the 19th October, with reference to the prospects of No. 91. establishing a steamer service between Wellington and the Islands, in addition to the present monthly service from Auckland.

I am sorry to hear that the inducement at present is not sufficient, because I thought that if a fortnightly service could be arranged it would save a large quantity of fruit which must now perish between the monthly visits of the present steamers, and I had been informed that on two or three occasions the steamer calling at Mangaia had no room for the produce awaiting shipment there. It has been brought under my notice by the auctioneers of Wellington that during the past few months their supplies have arrived in Wellington in an overripened condition, in consequence of not having been transhipped to the boat going south until three or four days after arrival at Auckland. This may explain why weak returns have been received recently from this port, and I think a direct service from here would do much to prevent this great loss, which otherwise must occur with fruit shipped for consumption in the South Island.

Nothing can be done until next session with regard to protecting the fruit from our Islands as against fruit from the Commonwealth and outside islands, and I think the Government and Parliament will have to be assured that the quantity of fruit available from the Cook and other islands will be very much greater than it has been in the past before they can entertain the idea of protection or give effect to it through the Customs. As I mentioned to you and others at the Islands, our fruit-imports from all sources amounted to 560,000 parcels, of which only 57,000 came from our own islands, so that a protective duty would mean taxation to a large number of people in this colony who consider tropical fruit such a desirable part of their diet. However, the matter will again be fully discussed by Cabinet before next session, and some definite steps taken. In the meantime I think it advisable to let the question of initiating another monthly steamer service from Wellington stand over until we have suitable accommodation for tourists at Rarotonga, when I hope the trade prospects will improve, but I hold a very strong opinion that no satisfactory development of the Islands trade can take place until we have the fortnightly service.

I have, &c.,

C. H. MILLS.

The Resident Commissioner, Rarotonga.

No. 118.

Cook and other Islands Administration, Wellington,
17th December, 1903.

Memorandum for His Excellency the Governor.

THE HON. C. H. MILLS presents his compliments to His Excellency, and begs to enclose a copy of a letter received from the Resident Commissioner at Rarotonga, pointing out that the work of opening boat-passages through the reefs at Mangaia and Atiu cannot conveniently be carried out during the summer months. Mr. Mills respectfully suggests that the Governor cause this fact to be communicated to Admiral Fanshawe, who has promised to have the work done next year.

C. H. MILLS.

No. 119.

Cook and other Islands Administration, Wellington,
18th December, 1903.

FRIENDS,—

I have received your kind letter of the 20th November, and heartily return your saluta-No. 110. tions. It was very pleasing to me to hear from you, and see from the words of your letter that apparently you are not averse to the changes now being made in Mangaia. I can assure you that in appointing Mr. Large as Resident Agent we are acting only for the benefit of all of you. I am anxious to see that all matters are carefully administered at Mangaia and that justice is done to every one, and so I hope you will do all you possibly can to uphold the Resident Agent's authority. I know, when you say you are true Britons you both mean to obey the law in every particular as good citizens of the great Empire to which we all belong.

Trusting that New Zealand will prove a true parent to all her children in Mangaia, and that there will be no more need to cry, and with greetings to all, and best wishes for your prosperity during the new year.

Yours, &c.,

C. H. MILLS.

Miringatangi and Daniela, Mangaia.

No. 120.

Niue, 19th December, 1903.

SIR,—

I have the honour to inform you that Mr. Haszard leaves to-day for Tonga *en route* for Auckland, having completed the circuit of the island. This is the first opportunity he has had to leave, and, in fact, he has only just completed his work. I have given him £20 on account, and the balance will be paid when he has completed the plans.

I have, &c.,

C. F. MAXWELL,

Government Agent, Niue.

The Hon. the Minister of Trade and Customs, Wellington.