

blocks of land on that island so that intending settlers may obtain a good title for their leases. More than this the Government of these islands cannot do at present. We have recognised the family rights to land throughout the Group, and cannot make men lease against their will. Eventually it will be necessary to tax unimproved lands, but that cannot be done until our surveys are completed.

With regard to paragraph 2, (a), I do not think that any regulation other than those already in force will be required.

Paragraph 2, (b), requires consideration, and I have submitted this to the standing Fruit Committee of the island, who will report separately for your information. If I am right in supposing that this paragraph refers to the local inspection and fumigation of fruit in order to prevent the present delay in the delivery of the same in Auckland, and the consequent loss to shippers, it would seem to me that local inspection would benefit the islands; but in such case the certificate of the local Inspector must be sufficient to clear the fruit in any port in New Zealand, since it is not likely that shippers will consent to a second fumigation and handling.

There is a second point to be considered in this paragraph. We are ready and willing to bear the expense of fumigation-chambers, but I do not think that the finances of the local Administration could bear the salary of the Inspector.

Paragraphs 3 and 4 may be taken together. As to the first, I may remark that it might be of great value to the European planters of this Group to be able to order fruit-trees through the Government of New Zealand if they could thereby insure that they would obtain the varieties ordered, such as the Washington Navel and the Valentia Late (oranges). We have already imported oranges of these sorts, but it is extremely doubtful whether we have one genuine tree of the species ordered. Assistance in the direction of a supply of new fruits or species of fruits would be a direct benefit to the island; but I think the time has hardly come for the establishment of experimental nurseries. Whatever improvement may take place in these islands must come from the European settlers, and they are now too few in number to warrant the cost of an establishment such as is suggested in paragraph 4.

I will submit paragraphs 2 to 4 to the Fruit Committee at once, and forward their report by this mail.

I have, &c.,

W. E. GUDGEON,

Resident Commissioner.

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

No. 4.

SIR,—

Rarotonga, Cook Islands, 8th June, 1905.

I have the honour to recommend that Mr. Henry Williams, of Manihiki, should be appointed Resident Agent for the Island of Rakahanga. He has a splendid boat, and can visit the latter island as often as may be necessary.

Much credit is due to Mr. Williams for the present condition of affairs at Manihiki. On this occasion I had not one complaint, and the people ascribed their peaceful condition to the kindly manner in which the Resident Agent carried out the laws of the island, and kept the Native Magistrate in check.

Should you approve this recommendation, I propose to vote £20 per annum as travelling-expenses for the Resident Agent, Rakahanga.

I have, &c.,

W. E. GUDGEON,

Resident Commissioner.

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

No. 5.

SIR,—

Cook and other Islands Administration, Wellington, 8th June, 1905.

A.—3, 1905,
No. 180.

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 25th April, with reference to a severe hurricane reported to have been experienced at Manihiki in March last.

I shall be glad to receive your report after your return from the northern islands, and trust it will be found that the effects of the storm have not been so widely felt as is feared from the information at present to hand.

I have, &c.,

The Resident Commissioner, Rarotonga.

C. H. MILLS.

No. 6.

SIR,—

Rarotonga, Cook Islands, 8th June, 1905.

In pursuance of instructions contained in your telegram of the 16th May, I have the honour to forward herewith a return of the population, both European and Native, for the present year. I regret that I am unable to furnish you with a return for last year, which, however, would be practically the same as at present.

I would point out for your information that I have to depend entirely on information derived from the Natives in compiling any return of this nature, and that such information is more or less