

## No. 214.

SIR,—

Rarotonga, Cook Islands, 23rd May, 1906.

No. 206.

In reply to your letter No. 158, of the 10th instant, and the memorandum of Mr. Hogben on the subject of the education in the Cook and northern Islands, I have the honour to remark that the case of New Zealand quoted by Mr. Hogben differs materially from that of these islands. For the first twenty-five years the Maoris sternly resisted the attempt to anglicize them. Here every child hopes to learn English, and the support they have given to the Catholic schools is entirely due to the fact that the London Missionary Society were hostile to the teaching of English, and the Catholics forced the hands of that mission. The Tereora school has since done good work, sufficient to show that if it were necessary or expedient all of the rising generation might speak English within ten years.

I submit, however, that it is not expedient that English should be taught in all the islands. In my opinion the mere teaching of English will tend to depopulate islands of the Niue class, where at the best the people obtain only a bare subsistence. Samoa, Tonga, Tahiti, and Rarotonga are attractive, and will retain not only their own population, but will absorb the people of other islands.

The people of the coral islands, if educated, will leave their homes in search of something better, and a knowledge of English will enable them to do this. Of what possible use can education be to such islands as Penrhyn, Rakahanga, Manihiki, Pukapuka, Mitiaro, or even Mauke? In such communities education can only create a desire for things unattainable. At the best only one in twenty of the boys will obtain employment as clerks or storemen, and the rest will be spoiled for the work for which they are best fitted—viz., the cultivation of the soil.

I would point out that the principles of education and evolution have not yet begun to work among the Polynesians; their only idea on the subject of education is that they may thereby acquire wealth and avoid work. As for the moral effect of education, they naturally do not believe in that, inasmuch as it is the best-educated among them who are the greatest rogues.

I would suggest that for the first three years our efforts should be directed towards one training-school at Tereora, but not necessarily on that site, and a good village school at each of the following places: Avarua (Rarotonga), Oneroa (Mangaia), Arutanga (Aitutaki), where we can take over the Araura school, and a school at Atiu. These educational establishments would be sufficient for three years, and if the results at the end of that period justified further efforts, the system might be extended. Under no circumstances should the teaching in the ordinary schools go further than the Fourth Standard.

I cannot see the necessity for land in connection with any of the schools except used as at present to reduce the cost of board and lodgings for the pupils. No school will effectively teach industrial occupations to the Polynesian. If the industry be displayed in the direction of feeding themselves they will probably acquiesce; but if with the view of teaching them a better system of husbandry, they will probably charge the Government with trying to make money out of them.

Any recommendation I may make herein will, I hope, be understood to be the maximum of our requirements, and I think that at present the Island of Atiu may well be left out of the scheme. At Aitutaki there is a fine building that may be used as a boarding and a day school. It is nominally the property of the London Missionary Society, but only so long as they shall use it as a school. It could be taken over without expense.

At Atiu there is a piece of land with buildings thereon, all of which should be used as a school and for school purposes, and could be taken for that purpose.

The Tereora school I do not recommend the Government to take over. It is a wooden building on poor and unsuitable land. It would be better to build in Avarua near the present school, which Makea would give to the Government. By this means we could have the village school side by side with the training-school for teachers, superintended by the one man. The high school would not be necessary at present, but the head of each school must be a European.

Mr. Hogben does not know the avidity with which the Polynesian grasps at positions of authority, or he would not say that a Native would despise the £20 per annum as a teacher; but he should have a chance of rising to say £50 per annum.

Under any circumstances I would suggest that before any steps are taken a member of the educational staff of the colony should visit this island and observe the position for himself. An expensive institution is not required.

I have, &amp;c.,

W. E. GUDGEON,

Resident Commissioner.

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

## No. 215.

SIR,—

Cook Islands Administration, Rarotonga, 24th May, 1906.

In reply to your wire of the 14th instant, I have the honour to inform you that Mr. P. Brown will proceed to Wellington by the June steamer in order to acquire a knowledge of the departmental methods of dealing with fruit.

I have received notice from the Union Company informing me that they will not object to one of their large sheds being transformed into a fumigating-shed, provided that the facilities for shipping now in existence be not affected by the transformation. To remove any doubts from the mind of the head officer of the company, a copy of the plans will be forwarded to them, and the building will be ready for the late crop of oranges.

I have, &amp;c.,

W. E. GUDGEON,

Resident Commissioner.

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

No. 198.