

I submit that we have every reason to be satisfied with the result of the visit to Rakahanga, for the people have already begun to clear and plant the lands awarded to them on the ocean boundary, hitherto unplanted. In this instance I have made the fees absurdly small, but it is necessary to encourage the people to obtain titles to their lands, and the question of fees is of less importance than the improvement in the condition of the islands, both social and economic, which must result from fixity of tenure.

I have, &c.,

W. E. GUDGEON,

Resident Commissioner.

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

No. 90.

SIR,—

Rarotonga, Cook Islands, 7th November, 1905.

In reply to your letter No. 270, of the 15th September, I have the honour to report that the circumstances of these islands have altered greatly for the better since your visit, when I first proposed the establishment of a branch of the New Zealand Agricultural Department in Rarotonga. No. 64.

At the present time all the good land near the port has been planted with bananas, and these yield a fair return to the Native owners, so that it would be impossible to lease such lands except perhaps at Titikaveka.

I do not think we should be justified in employing an officer at £300 per annum merely to look after an experimental plantation of 20 acres. Any such officer should have control of all the fruit shipped, and that fruit ought to be fumigated here. At present the value of the fruit (oranges) shipped is so small that it does not warrant any expenditure on the part of New Zealand or of the local Government.

The preliminary expenses of this undertaking would be as follows:—

	£	s.	d.
Superintendent's house	300	0	0
Sheds	100	0	0
Fencing and clearing	100	0	0
Total	500	0	0

The annually recurring cost of the establishment would be as follows:—

Salary, Superintendent	300	0	0
„ European labourer	100	0	0
„ Native labourer	100	0	0
Incidental, including rent	100	0	0
Total	600	0	0

I would suggest for your consideration that no further steps should be taken in this matter until the more important question of the protection of the island fruit has been settled, for on that question depends the future of the fruit industry.

I have, &c.,

W. E. GUDGEON,

Resident Commissioner.

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

No. 91.

SIR,—

Rarotonga, Cook Islands, 7th November, 1905.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of Federal Ordinances 14, 15, and 16, and No. 66. of the Rarotonga Council Ordinance No. 5, all bearing the assent of His Excellency. These Ordinances will be gazetted forthwith. No. 66.

I have, &c.,

W. E. GUDGEON,

Resident Commissioner.

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

No. 92.

SIR,—

Rarotonga, Cook Islands, 7th November, 1905.

In reply to your letter No. 296, of the 28th September, I have the honour to inform you that Ordinance No. 3 of the Aitutaki Island Council, with the assent of His Excellency thereon, has been received, and the amendments suggested by the Attorney-General have been duly made. No. 71.

I have, &c.,

W. E. GUDGEON,

Resident Commissioner.

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