

No. 84.

Rarotonga, 6th February, 1902.

SIR,—

I have the honour to forward a letter from Mr. E. Blaine, solicitor, referring to appeals from this Court to the Supreme Court of New Zealand.

It is of importance that rules and regulations should be made for the guidance of appellants; but, as most of these cases will, from the nature of the foreign population, be childish in the extreme, and be based on questions of fact rather than law, it seems to me that subsection (4) of section 4 would meet all cases likely to arise.

I have, &c.,

W. E. GUDGEON,

Resident Commissioner.

The Right Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

No. 85.

Rarotonga, 20th February, 1902.

SIR,—

I have the honour to enclose a report on the Cook and northern Islands for the year 1901-2, but have omitted the trade statistics which it has heretofore been the rule to include in this report, since I find on inquiry that these returns are now made direct to the Customs Department of New Zealand.

I have, &c.,

W. E. GUDGEON.

The Right Hon. the Premier of New Zealand, Wellington.

Enclosure.

REPORT ON THE TRADE AND SOCIAL CONDITION OF THE EASTERN PACIFIC.

THE past year has in many respects been a bad one for the Cook Group, for on most of the islands the orange-crop has been limited in quantity, and, in Rarotonga, of indifferent quality, owing to the insect-pests imported in old cases from New Zealand and other places. Fortunately, the Islands of Mauke, Atiu, and Mitiaro are at present free from these blights, and measures have been taken to prevent further infection.

The coffee-crop has been much below the average in quantity, but of fair quality; and the same may be said of the copra, which is our chief article of export. Not more than 800 tons have been exported from the group during the past year, and of this at least 300 tons was the produce of Aitutaki, the smallest but best planted of all these islands. No valid excuse can be made for the lack of copra in the remaining islands, for, with the single exception of Mitiaro, the inhabitants are not compelled to live on the cocoanuts, nature having provided them with yams, taro, bread-fruit, and many species of the plantain and banana.

On the northern islands many cocoanuts must necessarily be used for both food and drink, and therefore the output of copra is limited as compared with the nuts actually produced. On the most moderate computation every member of the population living on a coral island must consume fifteen hundred nuts—namely, half a ton of copra per annum.

In the following schedule I show the present production of copra in each island, and an estimate of what it might become if the islands were properly planted and the trees attended to:—

Island.	Area.	Population.	Present Production of Copra.	Estimated Possible Product.	Pearl-shell.
	Square Miles.		Tons.	Tons.	Tons.
Rarotonga	30	2,100	150	2,000	...
Mangaia	30	1,541	150	500	...
Atiu	32	820	125	1,800	...
Aitutaki	7	900	350	450	...
Mauke	4½	370	160	350	...
Mitiaro	4	165	40	80	...
Manuae	1½	10	60	400	...
Takutea	4	Nil	10	100	...
Penrhyn	3	389	30	100	100
Manihiki	2	570	100	200	10
Rakahanga	2	400	100	200	...
Suwarrow	½	30	25	100	...
Palmerston	1	65	100	180	50
Niue	110	4,576	500	3,500	...
Pukapuka	2(?)	505	100	200	...
Nassau (no information)...
Total	231½	12,441	2,000	10,160	160

As the above schedule requires explanation in order to show why certain of the islands are comparatively unproductive, I will report on the condition of each island separately.