

I do not think that the methods pursued by the navy, or the material (gun-cotton) used by them, will be suitable to the work we have to do, and Captain Wilkin, I gather, is of the same opinion. Where there is a crack in the reef gun-cotton will widen it quickly; but at Mangaia and Atiu we have no such help, and the work must be done by drilling and dynamite. This we shall have to do ourselves, and it is fortunate that I had imported from New Zealand tools and material to this end, and to the value of £37. The "Clio" may be useful to us in blowing part of the sea face of the reef down, but the real work will devolve upon the shore parties under Mr. Large.

I have, &c.,

W. E. GUDGEON,

Resident Commissioner.

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

No. 34.

Rarotonga, Cook Islands, 3rd August, 1904.

SIR,—

No. 33.

I have already reported to you my visit to Mangaia on the 25th July last, and that we were unable to do anything towards blasting passages through the reef. I have now the honour to inform you that during the three days I remained on the island I was fully employed in the Land Titles Court and High Court. In the former Court I succeeded in defining the title of the London Mission to their lands at Oneroa, Tamarua, and Ivirua, though not without opposition from the young people, who attempted to dispute the very clear grants made by their grandfathers in 1849, and subsequent confirmation of those grants, which were really unassailable. Finally I succeeded in satisfying all parties by awarding the land to the mission, subject to the right of the Natives to keep their canoes and build shelter-sheds on the sea slope of this land, this being a right that the Natives had exercised for hundreds of years, and had never surrendered, though it had been opposed by the Rev. Mr. Cullen, and hence the present opposition.

I find that Miringitangi and his small following are still obstructive, and have lately opposed the new election of the Council, and also have tried to stop the surveys. At a large meeting in the Courthouse I commented strongly on this, and pointed out that, under the provisions of "The Au Empowering Act, 1899," a new Council had to be elected every two years, and therefore there was now no Council, and I pointed out the absurdity of their allowing themselves to be led by a man who made such mistakes, and knew so little of the law that they themselves had made. As for stopping a survey ordered by the Land Titles Court, I pointed out to them that it was well that they had not persisted in this absurd action, for I could not have allowed that to pass, even though I had come to the island resolved not to punish actions that were more the result of ignorance and excessive vanity than of opposition to constituted authority. Finally, I asked them why they alone of all the Cook Group attempted to stop the march of civilisation, and indicated clearly to them that they were merely destroying the native mana of Mangaia.

Tamangaro and Daniela Tangitoru, with others, admitted that they had been in the wrong, and told me that there would be no trouble in the future. Miringitangi was stubborn, but the result will be that the people will no longer listen to him, and he will gradually lose all influence.

I am satisfied that matters will improve daily, for Mr. Large has the interests of the people very much at heart, and they will shortly recognise this fact.

By the enclosed plan you will see that I have taken a landing-place under the Order in Council, and also a small piece of land in a suitable position as a site for a residence. This last was effected by arrangement with the Rev. Mr. James, who objected to the landing-reserve being extended further north on to Section 3, and suggested that we should take Section 1 in lieu thereof. I have asked Mr. Hutchin, as head of the Mission, to fix the compensation for Section 1, but he has refused to accept anything, as he considers that the Mission has ample lands.

The Government quarters are now in course of erection under the hands of the best Native carpenter in the Islands, and Mr. Large will see that a good job is made of it.

I have told the people of Mangaia that I will next year recommend for your approval that a sum of £100 shall be voted towards the erection of a coral breakwater, to be constructed on the reef on the south side of the boat-channel that we are about to make, so as to break the rush of water out of the said passage, and that we will also, as soon as the funds permit, build a goods-shed, and cut a road through the Makatea cliff into the fertile lands of the interior.

I have, &c.,

W. E. GUDGEON,

Resident Commissioner.

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

No. 35.

Cook and other Islands Administration, Wellington, 4th August, 1904.

SIR,—

No. 18.

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letters of the 23rd and 29th June, Nos. 52 and 60, in reference to leprosy in the islands. With regard to preventing vessels bringing Native passengers from any island which may have been declared an infected place to any of the Cook Islands, I think the provisions of the New Zealand Public Health Act, which it is proposed to apply to the Islands, will meet the position. There is some doubt, however, as to whether there is power to apply portions only of New Zealand Acts in the way I had intended, and it will be better, therefore, for you to have an Ordinance passed as you suggest, and if no better arrangement has been made when it reaches me I will have it submitted to His Excellency for assent. It will be as well when dealing with the matter to make provision for the points previously referred to—viz., appointment of leper-stations, isolation of patients thereon, and punishment of those who conceal the disease.