

No. 31.

SIR,—

Niue, 15th July, 1904.

I have the honour to report to you that H.M.S. "Clio," Commander H. D. Wilkin, arrived here from Nukualofa on Tuesday, the 12th instant, at 1 p.m.

On Wednesday I proceeded with Captain Wilkin to Tuapa, where we decided upon the best place to commence operations. Three charges of 16½ lb. each of gun-cotton were fired by the torpedo staff from the warship. These explosions had the effect of widening the boat-channel and removing previous obstructions.

It was, of course, impossible to blast a passage through the reef without proper appliances for drilling the rock. Work of this latter description (if necessary) would be best undertaken by shore parties, and dynamite would be more efficacious for this purpose than gun-cotton. It would not, however, be worth the expense of doing this at Tuapa, as it would involve many weeks' labour without commensurate benefit.

On Thursday the party from the warship again visited Tuapa, and fired another charge, thereby completing what was required.

To-day (Friday) the Captain went to Avatele at my request, and accompanied by me, to see what could be done to remove a rock which was a serious impediment to working cargo at that place. Four charges of gun-cotton were fired, which have demolished the rock, and greatly enlarged the boat-harbour, thereby effecting a vast improvement. I shall complete the work with Native labour and dynamite.

The warship leaves to-morrow for Rarotonga, thence to Mangaia and Atiu. I am doubtful, however, whether she will be able to accomplish as much at the two latter places as she has done here, owing to the absence of natural channels which might be enlarged by explosives. In order to blast a passage through the solid reef, a body of men should be employed, equipped with suitable steel drills, hammers, and crowbars, and an ample supply of dynamite or gelignite. With the aid of these accessories I would undertake to cut a passage through these coral reefs, but it is hardly work that can be successfully accomplished by a warship for obvious reasons.

In conclusion, I would say that Captain Wilkin has shown the utmost courtesy and readiness to respond to my suggestions, and the fine body of men under his command have ably and skilfully carried out his orders.

I am informed by Captain Wilkin that the cost of the gun-cotton charges is £1 15s. 6d. each, so the total cost of the charges expended is £14 4s., without including primers, &c.

I have, &c.,

C. F. MAXWELL,

Resident Commissioner.

The Hon. C. H. Mills, Minister in Charge, Cook and other Islands Department, Wellington.

No. 32.

SIR,—

Rarotonga, Cook Islands, 18th July, 1904.

I have the honour to forward herewith the plan of the Vaikapuangi Block, part of which is now the Hospital Reserve, on which the accommodation-house is to be erected.

The position is that the whole block was originally leased by the firm of Donald and Edenborough from Karika Ariki for a long term (sixty years from 1888), and they released the seaward portion marked red on plan to the old Government of Rarotonga.

That portion of the land which is still in the occupation of the firm of Donald and Edenborough has an old house on it, but is otherwise valuable from the fact that, unlike our portion, it has splendid soil, and would make a valuable addition to the accommodation-house site for gardens.

I would point out that if we are to make this place attractive and do justice to the house we are building a tropical garden will be a necessity, and that the sooner we acquire a right to the whole block the cheaper it will be done, for I am of opinion that if left as it now is the firm may remove their premises at Avatiu to this site.

I therefore propose that the Government should take the land under subsection (10A) of section 10, Order in Council, and continue to pay the rent to Karika Ariki as at present, and also defer the question of compensation to Donald and Edenborough until we should require to oust them from possession, it being, however, understood that all compensation shall be based on the value of the land at the date on which the Court takes it over. If this course be adopted we shall then have one of the most valuable accommodation-house sites that could be procured in this island.

I have, &c.,

W. E. GUDGEON,

Resident Commissioner.

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

No. 33.

SIR,—

Rarotonga, Cook Islands, 28th July, 1904.

I have the honour to inform you that H.M.S. "Clio," Captain Wilkin, arrived here on the 20th instant, and on the 24th I left in her for Mangaia, and arrived there on the following day. The weather was, however, so bad that it was impossible to commence work, and, as it was evident that we were going to have another of the rough spells that have been so frequent this year, Captain Wilkin left the same evening for Tahiti, and will on his return call here for me, and we will then make another attempt.

3—A. 3.