

I am unable to say what term of lease has been granted to the Levers Company, but I submit that it is not advisable that the firm in question should obtain a monopoly of the cocoanut in the Eastern Pacific.

I have, &c.,
W. E. GUDGEON,
Resident Commissioner Cook Islands.

Hon. Prime Minister.

THIS matter is of more importance than appears on the face. Some of these islands will in the future supply large quantities of copra, and our occupation would prevent monopoly.

19th January, 1908.

W. E. G.

No. 35.

(No. 11.)

MY LORD,—

Government House, Wellington, 17th March, 1908.

With reference to the third paragraph of my despatch (No. 63) of the 3rd August, 1907, on the subject of the Royal Commission in England on Shipping Rings, I have the honour to inform Your Lordship that I have now received from my Ministers the further information which was promised.

2. I enclose a copy of a memorandum from my Prime Minister, furnishing the replies received from the four principal Chambers of Commerce in New Zealand.

The Earl of Elgin,

Secretary of State for the Colonies.

I have, &c.,

PLUNKET.

Enclosure.

Memorandum for His Excellency the Governor.

Prime Minister's Office, Wellington, 12th March, 1908.

THE Prime Minister presents his compliments, and with reference to G.H. No. 227/1907, containing despatches from the Secretary of State for the Colonies, relative to shipping rings or conferences, forwards the replies received from the Chambers of Commerce at Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin, which were asked to furnish the required information.

Auckland.—The Chamber has no means of obtaining the desired information as to the existence or working of shipping rings, and is of opinion that it can only be obtained from the head offices in London of shipping companies trading to New Zealand.

Wellington.—So far as the Chamber is aware, no system of deferred rebates exists in connection with steam services between New Zealand and the United Kingdom and America respectively. Whilst it is generally understood that some of the shipping companies are in concert with a view to the maintenance of reasonable freights, such combination does not appear to have a detrimental effect on shippers or consignees. The services to the Dominion by the various companies are maintained at a high standard of efficiency, and the ruling rates of freight are not considered to be in any way excessive.

Christchurch.—The Chamber is unable to reply to the question, but it understands that freights are uniform amongst shipping companies trading to New Zealand.

Dunedin.—The Chamber considers it is impossible to answer the questions, as the information could only be obtained by a parliamentary Committee empowered to take evidence on oath.

J. G. WARD.

No. 36.

(No. 12.)

MY LORD,—

Government House, Wellington, 17th March, 1908.

In my despatch (No. 104) of the 14th December last, I referred to a No. 26. Petition, which was being prepared in opposition to "The Chinese Immigrants Act Amendment Act, 1907," a Bill reserved for His Majesty's assent.

2. I now have the honour to forward to Your Lordship that petition, which is signed by a large number of Chinese residents in New Zealand.

3. I also enclose a copy of a letter which I received with the petition from Messrs. Skerrett and Wylie and Messrs. O'Regan and Dix (two well-known firms of lawyers in Wellington), whom the Chinese employed as their solicitors in this matter.

4. The petition and the letter, to which I have referred, were submitted to my Ministers for their observations, and my Prime Minister's comments are forwarded herewith.

The Earl of Elgin,

Secretary of State for the Colonies.

I have, &c.,

PLUNKET.