

pay £10 income-tax, also something on my leasehold property. I reckon that in New Zealand I would not pay more than £12 5s., as against £24 18s. 2d. We are not objecting to these payments, but we wish it realized that we do pay. Yet we are granted absolutely nothing in the way of representation. We particularly want representation. We object to the tremendous powers that are vested in the Resident Commissioner. We think it would be to the advantage of the country if he were assisted not only by Native but by European advice. We want to be able to express our view. Here we are practically nobody. It has been stated that the Commissioner represents us, but he does not. We think differently from him on many matters. The Natives two years ago—all the Arikis, all the members of the Council—signed a petition asking Mr. Massey to grant representation to the Europeans; but after two years, after they had been argued with behind closed doors, they were induced to change their minds.

W. G. TAYLOR (planter) stated: I am not interested in trading, but I must support the traders in what they have said regarding the price of fruit. From January last year until August I shipped rather over 2,000 cases, and my net return was 1½d. per case more than the traders offered. I shipped direct. I received some account sales which netted me £1 0s. 3d. per case here, but taking the average from January to August I received 4s. 1½d. on the wharf in Rarotonga. On one occasion I had the misfortune to have 300 cases on the wharf here. We were called upon by the Union Company to guarantee to fill our space or pay for it. I put my fruit on the wharf. The steamer was held up in Tahiti, assisting a man-of-war. The result was that I lost 300 cases of fruit. We asked the Government to advise us whether we had any remedy for recovery—whether the French Government were entitled to pay or the New Zealand Government. The answer we got from Dr. Pomare was that the Government could not advise us. That was one of the trips just after the starting of this new company, when the Natives were under a penalty of £5 if they broke away from the rule that they were not to sell under 5s. In dealing with the price of fruit you have to take into consideration all such losses as I have indicated. For the fruit I shipped last year I averaged in Auckland 9s. 6d. per case, gross, for bananas, and 10s. 6d. for oranges; in the southern market, 18s. 1d. for oranges and 18s. 2d. for bananas. Yet when everything was paid I had the small sum of 4s. 1½d. on the wharf at Rarotonga. In Auckland we are charged 10 per cent. commission; the Fiji people are charged 7½ per cent. And we are charged 5d. per case wharfage and cartage by the Auckland fruit-brokers. The wharfage is something under 1d., and the buyer carts his own fruit. It is sold on the wharf there. In Christchurch we get the fruit taken from the steamer to the auction-room for 7½d. per case. In Wellington the expenses, including freight and charges here, are 3s. 4d. a case. That is without commission, which is something like 5½d., and I think they charge us 1d. for taking delivery. All through the war period space has been very limited. The fruit-shippers here have been penalized for the benefit of the New Zealand farmer.

Voices: No, no.

Mr. TAYLOR: They have been penalized, because the "Flora" had to take phosphates, which were regarded as more important than our fruit. Probably they were, but we were the sufferers. People could not get the space they wanted. There was I with a plantation employing twelve men, and all the space I could get was perhaps eighty cases. Two hundred cases was a big shipment. The result was that my employees dwindled down, and to-day I have only two. The largest number I have had is forty-six. I had to leave my fruit and let it rot. The result of there being no space available is that to-day there are no bananas in Rarotonga. The last six boats, I think, have taken something like eight thousand cases. The boat that went last night had about six hundred cases, and the vessel which left a few days ago had some seven hundred cases. In eight boats the total cargo taken was not a good cargo for one vessel. There is no labour in oranges, but bananas take labour. I cannot grow a case of bananas under 4s. 6d. At the beginning of 1919 the Commissioner started his fruit company and interested himself in getting space for the Natives.

Hon. Sir JAMES ALLEN: On what authority do you say "The Commissioner started his fruit company"?

Mr. TAYLOR: It is generally known here that he started the fruit company. He has admitted that the Natives appealed to him. I do not blame him at all. I am a planter, and anything that Mr. Platts does for the benefit of the planters I naturally receive the benefit from. As to the Natives getting cases, any Native who has established himself with a firm can get cases and ship his fruit. The firms will ship it on consignment for him, or they will buy. I believe they did make a stipulation that one must consign all the year or buy all the year. But we were all in the same boat as far as space was concerned: we had to take what space was given us. The statement that the Natives have been penalized by the traders is, I think, not true.

Mr. YOUNG: Where do the phosphates come from that have been taking up your space?

Mr. TAYLOR: From Makatea, French Tahiti. For some considerable time there has been an agitation that Europeans should have some representation on the Island Council. In the past the Natives elected their own members—three of them. The Cook Islands Act of 1915 took that right away from them; members were nominated. Not so very long ago they decided at the Council, at a private meeting, that the time was ripe to have two Europeans on the Council, that they should have more of their own members on the Council, and that they should have some say in the expenditure of the money which they contribute to the revenue. This was brought forward by Mr. W. Browne at a meeting of the Council, the three points being embodied in one resolution. In the meantime the Commissioner had interviewed the Arikis—not the elected members of the Council.

Hon. Sir JAMES ALLEN: There are no elected members.

Mr. TAYLOR: There were at that time. These three gentlemen were elected members.

Hon. Sir JAMES ALLEN: They are nominated members, not elected.