

MEMORANDUM.

19th October, 1938.

From:-

To:-

The Commissioner for Native Lands,
Gilbert Islands,
at Ocean Island.

The Acting Secretary to Government,
Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony,
Ocean Island.

Settlement of Malden and Starbuck Islands.

It is doubtful if the establishment of settlements on Malden and Starbuck would be of much benefit to the Gilbertese, though they might be desirable on political grounds. Researches tend to show that Malden never, in pre-European times, supported a population of much over 200 and as Mr. Armstrong states that Starbuck is less favourable from a migration point of view it is unlikely that it would support a greater number.

2. Both islands appear to suffer from periodical droughts and although the rainfall in Malden Island from 1890 to 1918 averaged 25.27 inches, it was variable from year to year.

3. The prospects of a settlement on these islands proving a success would be greatly enhanced if it was undertaken in conjunction with the settlement of Christmas Island, or alternatively of Caroline, Flint, and Vostok Islands, which would enable a sufficient number of settlers to be sent to justify the cost of maintaining administrative control at such a distance from the nearest headquarters station.

4. It is, however, impossible to say anything definite about the prospects of a settlement until an expedition, similar to the one which recently visited the Phoenix Islands, has examined the islands carefully from the special point of view of their suitability for settlement purposes.

J.H. Maude,