

The whole of the Group lies within the hurricane zone and a number of destructive storms have been experienced, the most serious of which in recent years occurred in February, 1935, and March, 1943. From December to March the climate is warm and humid, and there is always the possibility of serious storms. In the remaining months of the year the climate in the Lower Group islands is mild and equable. The average temperature in Rarotonga during the last thirty-four years was 74 degrees, Fahrenheit, and the average annual rainfall in Rarotonga over the same period was 83·5 inches.

On 31st March, 1945, the Native population numbered 14,339.

There are several streams in Rarotonga, the water from which is distributed to all villages by a reticulation system ; all the outer islands, however, suffer from a lack of streams and wells, but water is provided from public tanks, the number of which is being steadily increased.

II. GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

Laws governing the whole of the Cook Islands are made by Act of the Parliament of New Zealand or by Orders in Council and regulations issued thereunder. Ordinances, restricted in their application to the islands where they are made, are passed by local Island Councils. These require the assent of the Resident Commissioner or they may be reserved for the signification of the Governor-General's pleasure. The Resident Commissioner in Rarotonga and the Resident Agents in the outer islands are the Presidents of the respective Island Councils, which consist in each case of elected, nominated, or *ex officio* members or combinations of such classes of members. In practice nominations are made only upon evidence of public choice.

The following legislative measures have been enacted since the last report :—

In New Zealand—

Statutes Amendment Act, 1941, section 7.

Island Territories Act, 1943.

The Cook Islands Local Defence Force Regulations 1941 (Serial No. 1941/60).

The Cook Islands Demonetization of Stamps Regulations 1941.

The Cook Islands Native Land Court Rules 1916, Amendment No. 1 (Serial No. 1942/86).

The Cook Islands Customs Duties Order 1942 (Serial No. 1942/156).

The Dependency Emergency Regulations (No. 2) 1939, Amendment No. 5 (Serial No. 1942/274).

The United States Forces Emergency Regulations 1943 (Serial No. 1943/56).

The United States Forces Emergency Regulations 1943, Amendment No. 1 (Serial No. 1943/151).

The Cook Islands Import Control Regulations 1944 (Serial No. 1944/19).

The Cook Islands Finance Emergency Regulations 1944 (Serial No. 1944/20).

The Cook Islands Patriotic Purposes Regulations 1940, Amendment No. 1 (Serial No. 1944/142).

In the Cook Islands—

Mangaia Ordinance No. 1 (1916) Amendment Ordinance 1941, No. 10.

The Resident Commissioner, Judge H. F. Ayson, C.M.G., retired on 16th March, 1944, after nearly twenty-one years' service in the Cook Islands. Mr. W. Tailby was appointed Acting Resident Commissioner on 15th September, 1943, and Resident Commissioner with effect from 1st April, 1944.

VISITS

His Excellency the Governor-General Marshal of the Royal Air Force Sir Cyril Newall, G.C.B., O.M., G.C.M.G., C.B.E., A.M., paid an official visit to Penrhyn Island on the 15th and 16th September, 1943.

The Right Hon. the Prime Minister and party paid an official visit to the Cook Islands from 27th to 31st December, 1944. Calls were made at Penrhyn, Aitutaki, and Rarotonga. The Prime Minister took the opportunity of meeting members of the Island Councils, of inspecting schools and hospitals, and of examining local conditions as fully as possible.

III. POSTAL AND RADIO

These Departments function in close liaison with the New Zealand Post and Telegraph Department, and their technical officers are seconded from that Department, but financial and executive responsibility rests with the Cook Islands Administration.

Particulars of business dealt with are as follow :—

	1941-42.	1942-43.	1943-44.	1944-45.
Money-orders issued	£56,274	£59,016	£106,883	£86,230
Money-orders paid	£6,681	£8,003	£27,210	£23,024
Post Office Savings-bank deposits	£12,969	£18,892	£40,689	£44,949
Post Office Savings-bank withdrawals	£14,249	£14,060	£23,629	£26,470
Number of depositors as at 31st March	2,230	2,487	3,173	3,676
Amount held to their credit	£33,414	£39,083	£57,333	£77,408
Number of Native depositors	2,113	2,361	3,037	3,553
Amount held to their credit	£19,006	£23,105	£39,929	£44,780
Number of radio messages handled (Rarotonga)	4,698	6,778	7,895	9,170