

growers' objections. Fifty plots were established under the amended scheme up to the 31st March, 1946; applications for another forty-nine plots had been finalized. By the middle of May, 1946, seventy plots had been planted and land prepared for thirty more.

Work at the Administration citrus nurseries at Rarotonga has of necessity increased to keep pace with the demand for citrus trees; all large trees which were becoming overgrown have been issued to growers and the areas have been planted again with stock for budding. An additional 5 acres of leasehold land have been acquired for the extension of the citrus nurseries.

A citrus nursery has been established at Aitutaki for the propagation of budded orange-trees for planting under an Administration-fostered scheme similar to that in Rarotonga. The scheme has been explained to the Aitutaki growers; fifty-five applications for plots have been received, and there is every prospect of the full number of one hundred plots being established when the trees are available for issue.

During the orange season visits at the time of shipment were made to all Lower Group islands by the Director of Agriculture or his senior Native Fruit Inspector, and visits between shipping calls were made to Mauke and Mangaia. Advice in connection with the inspection of fruit and agricultural matters generally was given to growers.

Large quantities of tomatoes were planted, principally in Rarotonga, but the rainy weather damaged the crop and only 35,375 boxes were shipped. The prices realized, while still high, were below those obtained in 1944.

No interest is being shown in the re-establishment of banana plantations in the Group, and until adequate facilities for shipment can be made there is little ground for encouraging the banana industry.

In January, 1946, the Lower Group again suffered heavy loss of export and Native food crops as the result of the severe storm experienced. Mauke and Aitutaki suffered the heaviest damage; Rarotonga and Atiu orange crops were also damaged, but Mangaia escaped comparatively lightly. In consequence, there will be a serious diminution in the number of cases of oranges shipped from the Group during the 1946 season.

LOWER GROUP ISLANDS

RAROTONGA

	1941.	1942.	1943.	1944.	1945.
Shipping calls during the year	10	9	8	13	13
High Court cases dealt with*	1,618	1,231	1,410	1,461	1,230
Cases of oranges exported ..	33,089	18,107	6,000	9,706	14,561
Boxes of tomatoes exported ..	13,991	12,966	23,460	37,751	35,096
Cases of bananas exported ..	17,319	9,419	4,825	2,298	3,136

* For years ended 31st March, 1942, 1943, 1944, 1945, 1946. Other items shown are for calendar years.

The air strip, 5,000 ft. in length, was completed during the year. The construction camp and buildings were converted into a house for the Aerodrome Maintenance Officer and into storehouses and workshops necessary for the operation of the air strip.

The New Zealand Public Works Department also completed the erection of the tuberculosis sanatorium.

The main road was damaged at Avarua and Ngatangia during the storm in January, 1946; repair work was commenced immediately, and was greatly facilitated by the use of the road-grader from the air strip. The formation and surface of the main road has been much improved by the use of this grader, and the road has been maintained in good