

Tomatoes.—The marketing of tomatoes is either by direct sale by the growers to local merchants or by the consignment to auctioneers in New Zealand either directly or through trading firms. The system of picking, packing, and inspection is well organized, the Director of Agriculture advising growers when to pick their crops, having regard to the availability of shipping. The fruit is graded to a rigidly enforced standard at the packing-shed. During the last year one shipment of 20,500 boxes was handled by twenty-nine local agents at Rarotonga.

Citrus Fruits.—Since 1937 the purchase and export of oranges and bananas has been in the hands of the Cook Islands Administration. All fruit exported is sold to the Internal Marketing Department of New Zealand at a price fixed on a f.o.b. basis. Standards are rigidly enforced and the fruit is graded on the American and Australian pattern. An up-to-date cool store and packing-shed is proposed.

Pineapples.—Plantings of this crop have increased at Atiu and Mangaia. In the latter island the crop was very good and the “Maui Pomare” uplifted a shipment. A roading programme is under way to open up further suitable land.

Coffee.—This crop is grown, but has not been exploited in recent years, though locally produced coffee is consumed in the Group and local merchants are seeking increased supplies.

Arrowroot.—The climate and soil of most of the lower islands, particularly Aitutaki, has been found suitable for the growing of this crop, and 83 tons were shipped during the year. Competition from the Australian product was experienced during the latter portion of the year.

Cotton is also able to be grown successfully, and the establishment of a textile industry in New Zealand has led to inquiries being made as to the quantity and quality of this product which is likely to be required.

Development Programme

The major developmental scheme is the citrus-replanting scheme. During the year 20 acres have been planted at Rarotonga, mainly late Valencia; the 100 acres in the replanting scheme have been satisfactorily maintained. The aim has been to keep the plants circle weeded and to grow cover-crops of crotalaria for turning in at intervals. The plots have been sprayed and pruned as necessary. The citrus nurseries contain 95,000 plants in various stages between almost ready for budding and ready for transplanting. Banana shoots are available, but their supply does not exceed 10,000. In Aitutaki 15 acres have been planted under the replanting scheme and 60 other plots have been maintained. In Mauke the replanting scheme was instituted during the year and the first 20 plots were planted. Sufficient plants have been “heeled in” at a nursery in readiness for an extension of the scheme.

A road-building programme is in operation in Mangaia and this will open up the fertile country of the interior. Four new roads were built in Atiu.

C. SECONDARY INDUSTRIES

The only secondary industries in the area are an orange-juice factory and a clothing and footwear factory, all in Rarotonga.

D. STANDARD OF LIVING

No accurate information as to the national income of the Group is available and it is difficult to arrive at a suitable method for its compilation. Attention is being given to experiments in this field in other similarly placed territories.

A list of retail prices of some staple commodities is included as Appendix II.