

Land Tenure

The laws relating to land tenure are contained in the Cook Islands Act, 1915, and its amendments. Practically all land is either Native customary land or Native freehold land as defined in the Act. Alienation of land is prohibited by law. Although few sections of land are vested in single owners, section 50 of the Cook Islands Amendment Act, 1946, contains a provision by which security of tenure may be guaranteed to an individual desiring to plant long-term crops, and much use is being made of this section, which is in accordance with slowly changing custom.

Tenure may be divided into the following five categories :—

- (i) Native Customary : Land held under Maori custom wherein the individual owners or families have not yet been determined.
- (ii) Native Freehold : Land held as above but where ownership has been determined by the Native Land Court.
- (iii) Leasehold : Land leased by the owners to individuals—European or Maori
This category includes areas leased by the Crown for public purposes either on a short-term lease or a lease with perpetual right of renewal.
- (iv) Crown Land : Land taken by the Crown by Order in Council or transferred by conveyance for public purposes.
- (v) Land vested in religious bodies.

The total of land held by non-indigenous inhabitants is set out in the following table :—

| | | | | Area. | | | | | | Total. | | |
|---------------------------------|----|----|--|------------|----|----|----------------|----|-----|--------|----|----|
| | | | | Rarotonga. | | | Outer Islands. | | | | | |
| | | | | A. | R. | P. | A. | R. | P. | A. | R. | P. |
| (i) Leased by Europeans | .. | .. | | 1,604 | 2 | 0 | 1,593 | 1 | 30* | 3,197 | 3 | 30 |
| (ii) Leased by the Crown | .. | .. | | 124 | 0 | 3 | 202 | 0 | 29 | 326 | 0 | 32 |
| (iii) Owned by the Crown | .. | .. | | 167 | 1 | 17 | 978 | 3 | 9† | 1,146 | 0 | 26 |
| (iv) Vested in religious bodies | .. | .. | | 83 | 3 | 19 | 58 | 2 | 29 | 142 | 2 | 8 |
| | | | | 1,979 | 2 | 39 | 2,833 | 0 | 17 | 4,812 | 3 | 16 |

* Includes the lease of Manuae and Te Au-o-Tu Islands, 548 and 996 acres respectively. † Includes the Islands of Nassau and Suwarrow, 300 and 600 acres respectively. Neither of these Islands is permanently inhabited.

Citrus Replanting

During the year the citrus replanting scheme has been maintained. Under this scheme, which was introduced by the Director of Agriculture in 1945, land is vested in an individual, who receives interest-bearing advances in the form of citrus trees, materials, and labour, and the use of mechanical equipment. No charge is made for the general supervision by officers of the Department of Agriculture. The scheme originally provided for the replanting of 100 acres on Rarotonga and an area of 50 acres each on Aitutaki, Mauke, and Atiu. The enthusiasm with which growers adopted the scheme has led to the recent authorization for the replanting of an additional 50 acres on Rarotonga and 25 on Aitutaki. The total estimated yield from all plantings when the scheme is in bearing is 67,000 cases of fruit from Rarotonga, 33,000 from Aitutaki, and 22,000 each from Mauke and Atiu.