

As regards fruit, the banana output decreased by 20,000 cases compared with the previous year, and a further shortage is predicted this year. Practically the whole of the banana output of the Group is shipped from Rarotonga, and this decline of 20,000 cases is regrettable, for it shows that the Natives are not giving the same attention to the cultivation of bananas as they formerly did. On inquiring as to the cause of the decrease, the explanation given is that all the accessible banana land is worked out through continuous cropping, and it is now necessary to go farther inland where there are no roads to obtain the rich soil for banana-cropping. The question of roading is the trouble.

The orange output increased by 6,608 cases, but this is no indication of industry on the part of the people, for the orange-tree receives no cultivation in the Cook Islands, and the crop varies according to the season.

The decline in the copra output is attributable to the hurricane which swept over a number of the islands in the Group in January, 1914, and it will yet take some time for the palms to attain their former producing-capacity. The price of this product has been again rising on the London market.

Several of the European planters are taking up tomato-growing. The experiment was tried last season, and the results were most satisfactory, notwithstanding the difficulties accruing from the infrequent shipping service for this variety of fruit.

Pearl-shell experienced a big drop in prices at the beginning of 1914, but when the war broke out the market completely collapsed, and sales have been postponed indefinitely in London.

Another knock which fruit-shippers received was a rise in freights. The freight on fruit shipped to Auckland, Dunedin, and Christchurch was raised 6d. per case, while 3d. was added to the Wellington freights. It is estimated that this increase will mean a tax of fully £5,000 on the Group.

The present prospects for the near future are none too bright. All that the Islands will have for export is the fruit and a small crop of copra.

I have, &c.,

W. J. STEVENSON,

Treasurer and Collector of Customs.

The Resident Commissioner, Rarotonga.

COOK ISLANDS ADMINISTRATION.

Revenue for the Year ended 31st March, 1915.

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Balance, 1st April, 1914				3,591	14	8
Customs duties, net—Rarotonga	5,206	12	1			
" " New Zealand	2,071	15	1			
Traders' license fees	707	10	0			
Stamp sales	514	10	9			
Fees and fines, High Court	438	19	11			
" R.M. Court, Aitutaki	35	12	0			
" " Mangaia	107	19	0			
" " Mauke	30	7	6			
" " Atiu	5	1	0			
" " Manihiki and Rakahanga	75	5	0			
Water rates, Avarua	209	18	4			
" Arorangi	94	18	4			
" Ngatangia	45	10	0			
" Matavera	40	0	0			
" Titikaveka	57	13	0			
Rents	74	5	0			
Interest	80	0	0			
Shipping fees and forms	10	18	4			
Hall licenses	6	0	0			
Ammunition Account—Cash balance	58	4	0			
Titikaveka Water Account—Cash balance	56	16	7			
Fruit-inspection Account—Cash balance	28	14	8			
Liquor Account—Cash balance	9	0	2			
Matavera Water Account—Cash balance	6	16	3			
Post-card Account—Cash balance	0	11	3			
Land Titles Court, fees	131	2	0			
Miscellaneous	13	15	0			
				10,117	15	3
Total				£13,709	9	11

Rarotonga, Cook Islands, 12th April, 1915.

W. J. STEVENSON, Treasurer,

Audited and found correct—A. G. CLARKE, Auditor.