

The volume of the postal business continues to grow. In 1908 it was £17,139; in 1913 it was £65,074; in 1918 it was £84,339.

The telephone subscription is £5 per annum for a business wire and £2 10s. for a private-house connection, with no limit to distance. The fee for a post-office box is 6s. per annum.

PUBLIC WORKS.

The Public Works Department has again had a busy year. The dwellinghouses for the wireless operators are almost completed.

Additional schoolrooms have been built at Avarua and at Arorangi. The cool store has been built and is in operation. It has already proved a great boon to the European residents, by enabling them to obtain fresh meat and butter, &c.

Private boxes have been provided at the Chief Post-office, all of which are let. The Government buildings and roads and bridges at Rarotonga have been kept in repair.

The Administration is devoting special attention to the development of the more backward islands of the Group, and especially to Atiu and Mangaia. Atiu has just been surveyed. Its roads are being laid off. To secure an adequate water-supply a number of large tanks and bathing-places are being built. At Mangaia arrangements for the building of a new open-air schoolroom, and another large cargo-shed, have been completed. At Mauke a new school and teacher's residence are being built. At Aitutaki further improvements of the water-supply are being made.

GENERAL.

Navigating-light.—A powerful light to assist navigation is to be placed on the wireless tower.

Harbour-improvement.—A proposal to lay down a large mooring-buoy that will facilitate the loading and discharge of vessels at Avarua is under consideration.

Public Library.—A circulating library will be opened shortly at Rarotonga.

I have, &c.,

F. W. PLATTS, Resident Commissioner.

The Hon. Dr. Pomare, Minister for the Cook Islands, Wellington.

REPORT OF CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER.

Rarotonga, 3rd April, 1919.

I beg to present my report for the year ended 31st March, 1919.

Upon the Island of Rarotonga 475 visits were made to Europeans, and in addition there were 486 attendances by Europeans at the Hospital; the corresponding figures for Maoris are 1,483 and 5,698. This gives a total of 8,142 visits and attendances for the year. The heaviest months for visits and attendances upon Europeans were November, with 153; October, with 113; and December, with 112; the months in which these were lowest were August, with 41; and April, with 48. The heaviest visiting months amongst the Maoris were September, with 310 visits; March, with 240; and August, with 187. The months with lowest number of visits were—Amongst Europeans, February, with 15; August, with 19; and June, with 23. Amongst Maoris, February, with 32; October, with 36; and June, with 44.

During the latter part of August and the first part of September there was an outbreak of infective catarrh resembling a mild form of influenza. This was the only sickness in epidemic form during the year.

The Assistant Medical Officer, Dr. Moore, unfortunately was laid off duty by illness during the epidemic, and a considerable increase of work devolved upon the Matron of the Hospital, Miss Sisley. The Administration was able to secure the services of Dr. Storey, who helped to tide us over the difficulty, I being away myself on duty in the out-islands.

Dr. Matheson, former Assistant Medical Officer, had, unfortunately, for health reasons, to leave the island in May after six months service. It is quite a mistake to think that a man who is not physically strong can stand the work in these Islands, and it is not advisable to send men who are not strong and healthy to attempt to do the work. The position is similar in regard to nurses.

The conditions of living for Europeans in these Islands are by no means ideal. There is too much need for living upon tinned foods, and there is a great scarcity of green vegetables.

The Administration is attempting to remedy the one evil for Rarotonga only; the other appears to be largely a matter for the white people themselves so far as the islands of the Group are concerned. In the northern islands the position is much worse, and not so much can be done in either case as in the Group.