

1922.

NEW ZEALAND.

COOK AND OTHER ISLANDS.

[In continuation of Parliamentary Paper A.—3, 1921.]

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

MEMORANDUM.

SUMMARIES of the annual reports of the Cook Islands and Niue Administrations are attached hereto.

There has been a change in the administration of Niue during the year. Mr. J. C. Evison resigned his position as Resident Commissioner. He will be succeeded by Mr. G. N. Morris, the former Commissioner.

The trade of our Islands, in common with that of all other tropical countries, is still suffering as a result of the world-wide depression in the prices of their special products. Lack of shipping-facilities, particularly in the more remote islands, also continues to hamper trade and development, but certain proposals which should effect a great improvement in the matter of inter-island communications are now under consideration.

The census of the inhabitants of the Islands, which was taken last year at the same time as the census in the Dominion, shows that the population is 13,209, as compared with 12,685 of the previous census of 1916. Full details of the census will be found in Appendices 13 and C to the New Zealand Census published in 1921.

27th June, 1922.

M. POMARE,
Minister for the Cook Islands.

REPORT OF COOK ISLANDS ADMINISTRATION.

Rarotonga, 14th August, 1922.

FINANCIAL.

The revenue for the year amounted to £17,719 6s. 4d., and the expenditure to £23,528 0s. 6d. In this connection it must be remembered that there were debts incurred during 1920-21 standing unpaid on the 31st March, 1921, amounting to £7,126 19s. 10d., all of which, with the exception of the Wireless Account, have been paid during the year. These back debts are spread through nearly all the items of expenditure, and this must be kept in mind when considering any individual item: for example, the salary items for the outer islands of the Group cover in each case a period of eighteen months. It is true that there was a balance of receipts over expenditure on the 31st March, 1921, amounting to £7,939 15s. 1d., but, while some of the assets representing this balance were bad, others were so slow of recovery as to be almost worthless. The debtors, on the other hand, were insistent and pressing, and to save the Administration's credit it was necessary that their debts should be paid as quickly as might be, at the expense of current local requirements.

The present year's operations, as shown by the Revenue and Expenditure Accounts, result in a credit balance of £2,131 0s. 11d., but this does not represent the true position of the Administration's finances as at the 31st March, 1922. This is shown by the Statement of Assets and Liabilities (permanent assets, plant, &c., not being taken into account).

Referring to this statement, under the heading "Contingent losses," it will be noticed that the Mangaia and Aitutaki Fruit-cases Accounts, the High Court and Native Land-Court Fees Accounts, and some other accounts have been written down. With the exception of the Native Land Court Fees Account it can be said with reasonable certainty that the amounts written off are bad, though the Administration is not at present in a position to write them off definitely. This will be done as soon as the exact figures are ascertained.