

A supply of arrowroot and some shoots of a new kind of kumara were taken from the Agricultural Department to Pukapuka to supplement the food-supply there. Next season this will be done for the other islands of the Northern Group. From time to time this has been done, as these islands are not so well off as the Group Islands in regard to variety in their food-supply.

Leprosy.—The position as regards this disease remains practically *statu quo ante*, although one is inclined to think that some amelioration has taken place in the condition of the lepers from the use of the ethyl esters of the fatty acids of the Chaulmoogra oil. One is not so sanguine, however, as regards permanent cure as the American and other authorities seem to be. We are, however, handicapped in a way they are not, by not having a central establishment with a permanent Resident Medical Officer. We are doing the best we can under our peculiar and difficult conditions. All have been visited during the year, and practical demonstrations and instructions given in the use of the E.C.C.O. to those in charge of the lepers.

General Remarks.—On the whole there has been progress in public health in most of the islands. The people are year by year taking more interest in public-health matters, and the medical and nursing staff and the Resident Agents are continuing their educative efforts. The school staff now are doing more in this way than in former years, and this co-operation should be in the long-run a benefit to the rising generation. The most necessary addition to our health staff for the benefit of the rising generation would be a dentist to look after and conserve more particularly the teeth of the children and adolescents.

One wishes to thank the other officials of the Administration for their willingness to help us wherever and however they can.

VITAL STATISTICS.

Attached hereto is a return supplied by the Registrar of Births, Deaths, and Marriages.

Island.	Births.				Deaths.				Marriages.	
	European.		Maori.		European.		Maori.		European.	Maori.
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.		
Rarotonga ..	2	1	60	59	..	1	33	36	3	24
Aitutaki	37	37	..	..	19	29	..	19
Mangaia	43	24	1	..	24	26	2	17
Atiu	28	18	..	..	14	19	..	10
Mauke	13	10	..	..	6	6	..	4
Mitiaro	3	7	..	..	3	3	..	2
Manihiki	5	8	..	..	5	7	..	..
Rakahanga	7	10	..	..	9	7	..	1
Penrhyn	5	4	..	..	5	3	..	6
Pukapuka	1
Palmerston
Totals ..	2	1	201	177	1	1	118	136	5	84

Complete returns have not yet been filed at this office from the islands as follows: Manihiki, Rakahanga, Penrhyn, Pukapuka, and Palmerston.

EDUCATION.

Under the capable guidance of Mr. J. C. M. Evison, Superintendent of Schools, good work continues to be done in all the schools.

In Rarotonga there are 556 scholars on the rolls of the four Government schools, with an average attendance of 517. There are 777 pupils attending the schools in the Lower Group, as follows: Mangaia, 354; Aitutaki, 220; Mauke, 107; Atiu, 96.

In January of this year a new syllabus was brought into operation. At present Mr. Evison is engaged in preparing a report on the proposed grading and staffing of all schools in the Group.

During the proposed visit of the Minister for Cook Islands it is intended to discuss a proposal to inaugurate a senior system of education in agriculture, woodwork, and other vocational subjects, suitable for both boys and girls.

At present there are seven scholarship boys at St. Stephen's and Otaki Colleges, and four girls at the Hukarere Girls' College. In addition several other boys and girls from these islands are being educated in New Zealand.

An important feature in our educational system is the training of Native and other pupil-teachers for the schools throughout the Group. A proposal is being submitted to have their training completed at one of the teachers' training colleges in New Zealand, after they have gone through a satisfactory course of teaching and education locally and attained the necessary entrance examination.

PUBLIC WORKS.

This department is still under the efficient control of Mr. E. A. Reid.

During the past two years no new works were undertaken, the activities of the Department being confined to the repair of roads and bridges, and the alteration, repair, painting, and furnishing of Administration buildings and residences. The amounts spent during the past twelve months under these headings are: Maintenance of roads and bridges, £1,082 19s. 6d.; alterations and repairs to buildings, and painting thereof, £1,847 6s. 6d.; furniture, £613 10s. 6d.: total, £3,543 16s. 6d.