

New Works.—The Resident Commissioner proposes this year to spend upon the present buildings, furnishings, &c., only the amounts which are necessary in order to carry out the commitments of his predecessor, and with whatever funds are available to prosecute as many new works as possible. The following amounts (*inter alia*) will be found on the estimates for the coming year: Tramway at Mauke to assist in loading and landing cargo, £300; new school buildings at Arorangi, £1,500; house for Resident Agent, Atiu, £1,200; on account water-supply, Aitutaki (full scheme estimated at £1,100), £500; telephone, post-office to wireless station, £300; telephone, post-office to Matavera, £300.

Waterworks. The Commissioner found that the statements contained in the last annual report regarding the Avarua water-supply were unduly alarming, although considerable repairs were necessary. These were undertaken immediately he took office. The chief work was the renewing and relaying upon solid concrete foundations of the pipe-line for over 1,000 ft. in the bed of the Takuvaine Stream, and the renewing of pipes in other places. Mr. Reid and his staff deserve praise for the manner in which the work was carried out. With ordinary renewals and repairs the pipe-line will last some years. There is no doubt that filter-beds and settling-tanks are necessary for the Avarua supply, but as the estimated cost (according to the late Mr. Connal's report) is £2,200 the work will have to stand over for the present. The Commissioner proposes, however, to acquire as soon as possible an area of 7 acres at the intake, partly as a site for the filter-beds and partly to prevent the growing of taro in the swamp lands adjoining the stream at this point.

Roads.—The contract system of the past is not altogether satisfactory, as the Administration has not the control and supervision which are necessary to secure good results. During the coming year it is proposed, in regard to the main road, to have our permanent working gang, including prisoners. A scheme is also being prepared for the opening-up of the Ara Metua and side roads. A number of culverts and bridges are necessary, which the Administration is prepared to construct, provided the Natives are willing to help themselves by doing a fair share of the other work necessary. Suitable moulds for making concrete pipes for these works are being ordered from New Zealand and America.

Telephones.—As indicated in the last report, the lines erected during Mr. Platts's time have proved unsatisfactory. The ironwood posts have rotted and fallen down in many places, and the only part of the original line (about fourteen miles) now in use is that between the post-office and the wireless station—a distance of a little over three miles. This part of the line also needs reconstructing. Through the Public Works Department in New Zealand we have imported ironbark poles from Australia, the life of which should be at least fifteen years, as against about five years of the local ironwood. A heavier bronze wire is also being obtained from the Post and Telegraph Department in New Zealand, and it is hoped that within the next three months the rebuilding of the line from the post-office to the wireless station will be completed. In the other direction it is proposed to properly rebuild the line from the post-office to Matavera, or further if possible, during the coming year.

Experimental Farm.—This is being maintained in good order.

LAWS.

Regulations have been made by Order in Council conferring upon the Resident Commissioner, in respect of undesirable immigrants, practically the same powers as in such cases are possessed by the Hon. the Minister of Customs in New Zealand.

Regulations have also been made providing for the holding of inquests in certain cases.

An Order in Council has been issued providing for appeals from decisions of Commissioners of the High Court to a Judge of that Court.

ISLAND COUNCIL OF RAROTONGA.

Regulations providing for the election of a European member of the above Council were gazetted last September. The election was duly held, and Mr. W. G. N. Taylor, the new member, has already taken his seat. It is anticipated that this innovation will have beneficial results.

HIGH COURT.

The attached report of the Registrar sets out the work of the Court during the year:—

Criminal Jurisdiction. A total of 696 cases were heard for criminal offences, breaches of regulations, and breaches of local Ordinances, as follows: Convicted and sentenced to imprisonment, 34; convicted and fined, 610; cases dismissed, 42; cases withdrawn, 7; civil cases entered under criminal list, 2; mental case, 1.

The total amount of fines inflicted was £840 4s. 6d.; total amount paid, £730 1s.; amount worked out in gaol, £88 6s.; amount outstanding, £159 19s. 6d. Included in the amount shown as outstanding there is a sum of £25 10s. damages awarded to a complainant, £8 3s. for fines owing by persons who are dead, and £12 2s. 6d. which I consider irrecoverable: leaving an asset under this head of £114 4s.

Civil Jurisdiction.—The total number of cases heard was eighty-eight, made up of applications for divorce, breaches of contract, debts, and maintenance. Total fees imposed amounted to £33; total payments made, £29 13s.; outstanding, £4 18s. Of the amount shown as payments made, the sum of £1 11s. should be credited to the previous year, as applications were made during that year and payments made during the present year.

The sum of £1 10s. 6d. was also collected as sundry fees and included in the High Court cash. Total receipts: Criminal, £730 1s.; civil, £29 13s.; sundry, £1 10s. 6d.: total, £761 4s. 6d.