

1930.  
NEW ZEALAND.

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# COOK AND OTHER ISLANDS.

[In continuation of Parliamentary Paper A.—3, 1929.]

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

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## MEMORANDUM.

Cook Islands Department, Wellington, 30th June, 1930.

I SUBMIT the annual report of the Cook Islands and Niue Administrations for the year ended 31st March, 1930, which discloses a satisfactory condition generally throughout the Group.

The Rarotongan Treasury shows an excess of revenue over expenditure amounting to £1,287 7s. 7d., and the Niue Treasury an excess of £2,203 4s. 8d.

The Cook Group is a particularly difficult one to finance. The Territory consists of fourteen islands scattered over a very wide area (850,000 square miles). The northern Group has little communication with the outer world, and is practically non-revenue-producing, while each island requires separate staffing and other administrative expenditure.

Even in the absence of devastating droughts or hurricanes it is difficult for the Territory to produce revenue for its ordinary expenditure, and it is only by a severe curtailment in every direction, by the postponement of many necessary works during the past two years, that a satisfactory balance-sheet has been produced. Such services as education, medical, water-supply, consumptive sanatorium, removal of leper patients for treatment to Makogai, roads and bridges, schoolhouses, &c., have necessarily had to be curtailed or held in abeyance awaiting more prosperous times.

Although during the year the trade of the island has been well maintained, a very heavy slump in the principal export (copra) has been operating for some time, and must have a serious effect on the finances of the coming year, and no extraordinary expenditure will therefore be undertaken.

The health of the people has been good, and the Medical Officers have traversed practically the whole of the Group, an undertaking of some magnitude with only three Medical Officers. A most pleasing and satisfactory feature of the report is the uniform increase throughout the whole of the Territory of births over deaths of the Native peoples.

All islands at which the New Zealand fruit-steamer calls have now been connected up with wireless, and the more northerly islands will also be joined up as circumstances permit.

There has been no serious crime in the Group, and the small police services have been practically self-supporting.

Throughout the year the m.v. "Maui Pomare" has carried out a satisfactory fruit trade with the islands. She has given to Niue the first regular service that island has had, and has opened up a banana trade which the Native people have been eager to exploit. The vessel has also been the means of creating a valuable banana trade with Samoa.

During the year a parliamentary Committee investigated the affairs of this vessel and reported that, in the absence of private shipping, the provision of the Government vessel to carry out the present service was justified.

The service, however, is very severely handicapped by the number of New Zealand ports of call, which imposes a heavy burden both financially and in the additional time occupied. As I advised in last year's annual report, a reduction of the service to one North and one South Island port would assist materially both the island fruit trade and the service being carried on by the vessel.

Owing to the necessity of reducing expenditure this year, the report is considerably abbreviated, and much interesting matter well worthy of record has been omitted.

A. T. NGATA,  
Minister for the Cook Islands.