

## AGRICULTURE AND FRUIT INDUSTRY.

Ample crops for domestic food-supplies were planted throughout the Group.

Owing principally to a very short orange crop in Rarotonga, the export of fruit for the year under review was below normal. No shipping provision having been made for the export of other than oranges from the outer islands, Rarotonga has provided the whole of the banana and tomato exports—viz., 103,711 cases, valued at £43,706.

An industry of importance to the islands has now been commenced in Rarotonga, having for its object the preservation of pure orange-juice. Several thousand gallons were preserved during the year and found a ready market. New Zealand's total requirements could easily be supplied from the Cook Group, and the company (a local concern) will make a bid for this trade provided it can compete against foreign imports. The value of this industry to the Group lies in the fact that it will absorb a considerable portion of the surplus crop of oranges, for which no shipping has hitherto been provided. Lemon-juice and peel were also handled by the company, and experiments are being carried out with spices, &c.

The Administration is co-operating with the company in growing experimental plots in the Government nursery.

Small trial lots of annatto seed have been exported by the Administration to New Zealand, where there is a demand, principally for colouring cheese. Papain samples were forwarded to the Imperial Institute, London, for report.

*Packing-sheds.*—The system of district packing-sheds inaugurated two years ago has operated smoothly, and is reflected in the great improvement in the packing of fruit coming forward to New Zealand. Great credit is due to the Native people who have carried out their promise to erect these sheds at their own expense. Most of the sheds have been freed from debt, and improvements are to be carried out during the coming year, such as concrete floors, &c.

Improper packing, when detected, was punished by fines: thirty-four growers were dealt with in this manner. This proves an effective deterrent to bad packing.

The outbreak of *Mytilaspes* scale reported last year, which seriously threatened the orange-trees of Aitutaki, has been completely checked by the importation of the chalcid wasp parasite.

Packing demonstrations by European Inspectors were held at Atiu, Mauke, and Mangaia.

Fruit exported from the outer islands suffered considerably last season on account of repeated bad weather during the call of the Union Steam Ship Co.'s cargo-vessel, and, combined with the system of carriage, resulted in heavy losses.

*Experimental Nursery.*—The experimental work at the nursery has been actively carried out, and large numbers of cuttings, plants, and seeds have been distributed throughout the Group, including cow-peas, New Zealand passion-fruit, bamboo and suckers, Malabar chestnut, sea-grape, *Hibiscus* cuttings, bird-of-paradise plants, grafted mangoes, fan-palms, cashew-nut seedlings, *Nephelium*, Brazilian cherry, Avocado pear, *Areca* palms, *Dracaena*, *Croton*, and *Escallonia* cuttings, Excelsa coffee, kumara cuttings, citrus trees and seeds, tomato-seed, Manihot cuttings, *Sapodilla*, *Poinciana regia*, Caffra plums, cocoa, ironwood seedlings and seed, banana shoots, breadfruit, *Carambolum*, traveller's palms, *Cocus plumosa* palms, rose-apple, Hawaiian passion-fruit, Indian laburnum.

A large number of climbing flowering-plants, principally *Bougainvillea*, *Bignonia*, and *Jasminum*, were distributed to the Au Vaine for planting at selected spots on the roadsides, under special care of members. These will soon be a noticeable feature on the main road around the island.

Raffia and Pass seeds from Madagascar have germinated and are growing slowly. West African oil-palms are growing well but making slow progress. Ginger and turmeric are growing well and nearing maturity. Excelsa coffee was imported and plants distributed to growers. Soya beans and pimento were received from New Zealand, but failed to germinate. Chillies, Large Red and Japanese, and coriander were received from New Zealand, and are growing successfully.

An experiment with Pabco Thermogen Mulch paper around young citrus fruit-trees has proved very successful in assisting in keeping down weeds and conserving moisture. The experiment will be extended to tomatoes next year.

*Noxious Weeds.*—Over three hundred warning notices were issued during the year, and additional inspectors were temporarily engaged in assisting with the eradication of weeds. Australian burr (*Xanthium strumarium*) is now almost eradicated. Lantana (*Lantana camera*) has been checked to a great extent by the action of the insect *Agromoyza lantane*, a parasite that attacks the lantana-seeds. Elephant's foot (*Elephantopus scaber*): The seed of this plant has spread rapidly. All known areas are watched carefully, and drastic action taken where it appears. Pitati mama (*Clerodendron fragrans*) is being gradually eradicated, but this is a difficult process on unploughable lands.

## HIGH COURT.

In Rarotonga the total number of criminal offences, breaches of regulations and local Ordinances, was 1,120, very little serious crime having been committed. In addition to the above 117 civil cases were dealt with in Rarotonga.

In the Lower Group and Northern Islands the Resident Agents, who are Commissioners of the High Court, with limited jurisdiction, held regular sittings throughout the year.

*Northern Group.*—During the months of May and June, 1929, the Chief Judge, accompanied by the Registrar and Surveyor, visited the Northern Islands of Rakahanga, Manihiki, and Penrhyn. At these islands, as practically no Land Court work has been done previously, the Court departed from the ordinary method of having surveys completed before the hearing of the case. The procedure adopted at the sitting at Rakahanga was first to go into the traditions regarding the first peopling of the islands. Genealogies were then taken, tracing from the ancestors down to the present day, and in this way it