

1932.

## NEW ZEALAND.

COOK AND OTHER ISLANDS.

[In continuation of Parliamentary Paper A.-3, 1931.]

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

MEMORANDUM.

Cook Islands Department, Wellington, 20th October, 1932.

MORE interest than usual attaches to the annual review of the Cook Islands Administration owing to the report of the National Expenditure Commission. After juxtaposing the bald figures of expenditure for the two periods 1914-15 and 1930-31 as £5,063 and £27,273 respectively, and stating that the grant from the New Zealand Treasury in 1931-32 was £21,633, the Commission proceeds to recommend:—

That immediate steps be taken to reduce the cost of administration, the increase in which (presumably between 1914-15 and 1930-31) it deems to be out of all proportion. To this end the Commission recommends—

- (a) That the Department be amalgamated with that of External Affairs under one Permanent Head; and
- (b) That the grants from the New Zealand Treasury to the Cook Islands and Niue Administrations be reduced to £10,000, special mention being made of a reduction in the expenditure on education.

The savings estimated (in the 1932-33 appropriations) are £11,000 and such further economies as may result from the proposed amalgamation.

The question of the m.v. "Maui Pomare" is dealt with separately by the Commission.

It may be inferred from the Commission's findings that it considers the time ripe for casting more responsibility for administrative and humanitarian services on the local Treasuries, and that it assumes a capacity in the latter to carry these effectively.

An effort in the direction of easing the burden on the Consolidated Fund has, for some years past, been made, and reductions in appropriations for services in the Cook Islands have been effected as under :—

		1930-31.	1931-32.	1932-33 (Estimates).
		£	£	£
Cook Islands (including Niue)	..	28,024	23,852	19,500
M.v. "Maui Pomare"	..	30,000	27,000	27,000
Totals	..	58,024	50,852	46,500

The policy of New Zealand in the administration of the islands of the Cook Group was from the inception modelled on that of Native Affairs here; and their system of government, the sanitary regulations, and method of determining land-titles were based on New Zealand's experience of the Maori branch of the Polynesian race.

During the period from 1919-20 onwards there was a great expansion in the public services of the islands, especially in regard to education and health, the development of the island fruit trade, and postal and wireless facilities. In addition to administrative charges and salaries, large capital expenditure was devoted to the construction of schools, hospital buildings, wharves, and landing facilities, wireless stations, roads, and the accommodation of officers.

The great distance of these islands from New Zealand, their comparative isolation, and the difficulties of inter-communication among them have necessitated transplanting to them a larger measure of services than would be required in, say, a county or district on the mainland of New Zealand itself.