

At Avarua School a new classroom 60 ft. by 20 ft. was built, while at Titikaveka School a new classroom was erected out of native materials.

At the post-office additional private letter-boxes were built, and a new motor workshop and benzine-shed were erected for the Public Works Department.

Cement was provided for the landing-places and bathing-places at Atiu, and a new tank supplied for the school.

Two 400 gallon tanks were forwarded to Mitiaro, and a new tank was provided for the radio-station at Mangaia.

A new wireless-station was built at Penrhyn Island, and also a leper concentration hospital (see Health section).

A wireless office was built at Manihiki, and materials for a similar office were forwarded to Pukapuka.

In addition, all Administration buildings throughout the entire Group were repaired and renovated as opportunity offered, and additional furniture was made and supplied where required.

Cars and Trucks.—The Administration vehicles were kept in good running order, four being completely overhauled.

AGRICULTURE.

Citrus.—Citrus trees are still recovering from the hurricane experienced during February, 1935. In some instances growers have taken in hand the pruning of their trees, removing dead wood, and cutting back old branches. Where this has been done the trees are showing good results in the production of new wood. Nevertheless, as so many of the trees are aged and worn out, it is apparent that they should be replaced by new plantings of young trees. Steps are being taken to impress this fact on planters generally at every opportunity.

The crop prospects this season on Rarotonga itself are light, and it is anticipated that the export of oranges from this island will be lower than last year. Reports to hand from the other islands indicate that good average crops are likely.

The total export of citrus fruits from the whole Group for the period under review was 75,671 cases—30,225 cases (comprising 29,431 oranges, 604 mandarins, 105 lemons, 3 limes, 18 grape-fruit, and 64 tangerines) from Rarotonga and 45,446 cases of oranges from the outer islands.

Owing to a mishap to m.v. "Matua" on her maiden voyage, approximately 5,100 cases of oranges at Atiu and 4,900 cases at Mauke were not shipped, although packed and assembled ready for shipment during the month of September last.

In addition, 249 cases of oranges were short-shipped at the Island of Atiu by m.v. "Hauraki" loading there in June last.

Bananas.—The planting of bananas remains about normal.

Better-quality fruit, with a fuller stage of maturity, is being shipped since the advent of refrigerated carrying space in the new vessel, and more favourable comments are being received on the out-turn of the fruit in New Zealand.

The total export of bananas for the period was 49,954 cases, all from Rarotonga, an increase of over 100 per cent. on the previous year.

Tomatoes.—The tomato crop was about normal, many growers, however, neglected giving full attention to their plantations, particularly in the way of spraying to prevent disease attacks.

The total export of tomatoes for the year was 39,541 boxes.

Coconuts.—Coconut plantations generally are thriving well.

The total export of coconuts has amounted to a total of 1,003 sacks. In addition, a small quantity of loose nuts was exported through the Parcels Post Branch.

Copra prices have firmed considerably this year, but there is a general shortage of nuts on Rarotonga, and copra-making has not been very extensive. The total quantity of copra exported from the whole Group during the twelve months was 1,184 tons, much below normal.

Domestic Crops.—The planting of products for local consumption, such as taro, kumeras, melons, &c., has been normal, and sufficient to supply requirements.

Planting Statistics. Rarotonga, for year ending 31st March, 1937.—Citrus, 945; bananas, 201,600; tomatoes, 1,008,000; pineapples, 4,740; taro, 420,650; kumeras, 221,800; yams, 7,390; breadfruit, 153.

Noxious Weeds.—During the latter part of the year special attention has been given to the question of clearing noxious weeds, which in some instances are rather prevalent. A thorough inspection has been made, and some 398 warning notices were issued to occupiers of property. Clearing is now well in hand, and a follow-up inspection at an early date should find considerable improvement. Failing satisfactory work being undertaken it will be necessary to bring delinquents before the Court for not complying with the requirements of the regulations.

Rat Menace.—Poison baits have been given a good trial in dealing with the rat pest during the past year, with satisfactory results. Red Squill powder appears to be the most satisfactory form of poison bait to use.