

AIR SERVICE

A fortnightly air service between New Zealand and Rarotonga has been inaugurated ; the first regular plane arrived in Rarotonga on the 26th May, 1945. The service has been maintained throughout the year with the exception of the month of December, when improved radio facilities were being installed in Rarotonga and Aitutaki to ensure uninterrupted communication with the aircraft during their flights between Western Samoa and Aitutaki. The air journey to Rarotonga from Whenuapai, New Zealand, takes three days, as the planes proceed via Fiji, Tonga, Western Samoa, Tutuila, and Aitutaki. The same route is followed on the return journey to New Zealand.

The institution of this air service has made a great improvement in communications in the Group, particularly during the time when the steamer calls are less frequent ; it has already proved its value in cases of illness and emergency. A recent reduction in fares will enable more people to use this swift means of travel between New Zealand and the Cook Islands.

XII. METEOROLOGICAL

	1941.	1942.	1943.	1944.	1945.
Total rainfall (inches) ..	56·88	76·99	79·59	64·76	90·02
Number of rainy days ..	115	131	112	116	233
Highest for any day (inches) ..	4·59	3·79	4·76	2·85	4·63
Date	21st Jan.	5th Oct.	14th Oct.	22nd Feb.	11th Aug.
Highest temperature (F.) ..	87·5	89·5	88	87	88·5
Date	16th Nov.	31st Mar.	27th Feb.	9th Mar.	15th Mar.
Lowest temperature (F.) ..	59	61	56	57	58·5
Date	8th Sept.	9th Sept.	1st Sept.	12th Aug.	8th June.
Mean of maximum thermometer (F.)	79·08	81·3	81·4	80	80·9
Mean of minimum thermometer (F.)	70·24	71·2	70·4	69	70·3

Severe storm conditions were experienced in the Lower Group from the 11th to 15th January, 1946 ; the storm reached its peak on the 14th January, when it attained whole-gale force with gusts of hurricane strength at Aitutaki and Rarotonga. Considerable damage was done to export crops and Native food plantations at Rarotonga, Aitutaki, Atiu, and Mauke ; some damage was also suffered at Mangaia and Mitiaro. Damage to buildings, however, was light at all islands and there were no serious injuries. N.Z.G.M.V. " Maui Pomare," leaving Rarotonga on 21st January, took additional food supplies to Mauke, Mitiaro, Atiu, Manuae, and Palmerston Island *en route* to Apia.

The rainfall for 1945 was the highest recorded since 1939.

XIII. AGRICULTURE

The year has been marked by real progress towards the re-establishment of the citrus industry in the Cook Islands.

In Rarotonga fourteen new plots out of the fifty-five 1-acre plots established under citrus-replanting schemes between 1940 and 1944 came into bearing, and from these ninety-eight cases were actually shipped. More growers are beginning to take an interest in plots under these schemes, and further advances were made available, with the result that thirty of these plots are now in reasonably good order.

An orange-replanting scheme at Rarotonga for the establishment of one hundred plots each of 1 acre, with ninety trees per plot, under the control of and financed by the Administration, was approved, but made little progress owing to the growers' objection to leasing their land. During a visit to Rarotonga, Judge J. Harvey, of the Maori Land Court, made recommendations, along the lines followed in New Zealand in the development of Maori land, which amended the original scheme and overcame the