

Due to the limited area of land and the system of land tenure, live-stock production is a haphazard undertaking and is not seriously considered by the Maoris. Animal husbandry is being introduced as circumstances permit. A small consignment of pigs and poultry from New Zealand has been imported into Aitutaki by the Administration.

There are no forestry resources in Rarotonga or in any of the outer islands, the original growth having been cut out for casemaking over forty years ago, with no steps taken to replant at the time. There is now a lack of adequate shelter on the coastal area, and soil erosion is in evidence on the hills after heavy rains. This problem is being attacked by the Administration.

Fisheries

With the exception of the bonito and allied types of fish, the Group, apart from the large lagoon at Penrhyn, is not well supplied with deep-sea fish. Most of the other islands have fair fish-supplies, and shell-fish are found on the reefs. Those islands which possess large lagoons or are not continuously occupied are better provided with these resources.

Pearl-shell is dived for at Penrhyn and Manihiki. Regulations are made restricting this occupation to Polynesians and forbidding the gathering of shell with diving equipment down to a specified depth of water. These regulations also determine which of the areas shall be fished.

Apart from the restrictions on the taking of pearl-shell, there are no conservation practices in force in the area.

Land-utilization

The soils of Rarotonga are red volcanic, and though no complete survey has been undertaken the analysis of two samples is included as Appendix III.

The amount of agricultural equipment in the area is small. The Administration has the undermentioned equipment which it makes available to orchardists and other farmers :—

Rarotonga : one 22 h.p. rotary hoe ; one tractor, plough, and heavy disks ;
two power spraying plants of 100 gallons capacity.

Aitutaki : one 22 h.p. rotary hoe.

Mauke : one 22 h.p. tractor ; one set of light disks ; one light plough.

The following equipment has been ordered to assist the citrus-replanting scheme : five tractors ; six spray pumps ; two tractor ploughs ; eight sets massive disk harrows. This equipment will be distributed throughout those islands where the scheme is in operation.

At Rarotonga it has been the practice to encourage growers to use fertilizer. To this end a scheme was introduced whereby a levy was made on all fruit exported. A deduction of 3d. per case was made on each case of citrus fruits shipped and 2d. per case for tomatoes. These deductions are kept as credits in the name of the individual shipper, and each year fertilizer to the total amount of the credits is purchased and the individual issues made on this basis. Many growers do not use the fertilizer themselves, but most of it is eventually applied to the soil, the apparent loss being the personal loss of the owner.

There is no system of plant breeding or selection at present, though with the establishment of the new experimental farm a scheme for crop-development will be pursued.

The Agriculture Department maintains a service for the control of the pests and diseases of plants, stocks of suitable sprays being kept and sold to the growers as required. The Department works in close collaboration with the New Zealand Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, who identify the pests and diseases as discovered and advise as to treatment.