

The following is a schedule of the moneys actually expended on public or remunerative works during the year ending the 31st March, 1907:—

	£	s.	d.
Rarotonga—			
Mountain water-supply	499	12	11
Compensation for land taken—Sections 10, 2, and 3...	754	0	0
Avana Bridge, Ngatangia	387	14	6
Avatiu Bridge	342	17	0
Creek retaining-walls, Avarua	176	11	1
Iron reinforcements for Avarua concrete bridge ...	40	18	0
Fencing Government lands	25	19	4
Furniture, Government buildings	8	6	9
Additions to printing-office	4	11	3
Material and labour, three wooden bridges	84	0	0
Carting and labour, metalling roads	54	0	0
Mangaia—Roofing Courthouse, &c.	20	8	0
Mauke—Blasting reef-passage	10	16	0
Takutea—Planting island with cocoa-palms	109	17	6
Aitutaki—			
Arutanga bathing and water tanks	40	0	0
Repairs and additions to quarters	19	19	0
Concrete flooring to stone jetty	131	10	0
Vaipae tank	80	16	9
Total	2,791	18	1

Of the above expenditure, £84 14s. 9d. is derived from rates.

PUBLIC HEALTH.

The health of the people during the past year has been normal, as will be seen by reference to the following return from the leading islands of the Group, the births exceeding the deaths by a small percentage.

Vital Statistics for 1906.

Island.	Births.	Deaths.	Marriages.
Mangaia	61	51	...
Rarotonga	93	88	33
Aitutaki	39	38	18
Mauke	24	11	7
Palmerston	8	3	1
Manihiki	14	17	3
Rakahanga	12	19	1
Penrhyn	11	9	1
Total	262	236	64

I regret that I am unable to give complete returns for the whole Group, but they have been delayed by reason of the want of communication with all the Northern Islands during the hurricane season. The remaining returns will, however, be forwarded immediately after receipt.

The return of births, deaths, and marriages is instructive by reason of its showing the potency of an admixture of European blood. The population of Palmerston is as nearly as possible one hundred—men, women, and children—and they are all descendants of the European sailor William Masters. Had the birth-rate of Mangaia—the healthiest of the islands—been in the same ratio, 120 births would have been recorded instead of 61. Under the same circumstances, Rarotonga would have had 170; and the deaths at Mangaia and Rarotonga respectively would have been 45 and 64.

The excessive death-rate of these islands is due for the most part to the existence of a rascally lot of tohungas, who are encouraged and supported by the chiefs. One of these men, by a most barbarous and unnecessary surgical operation, killed the finest young chief on this island; and any one with Maori experience would know that the man would not have dared to perform this operation unless he had been supported by Tavita's Ariki relatives. The young man was murdered by his own people while Dr. Gatley was in actual attendance on him.

Very efficient supervision is now exercised over the lepers of the Northern Islands by the Resident Agents, Williams and Nagle: but here also it is done in spite of the opposition of the people. They must have known that Ioane, the Native missionary at Tukao, had for years been a leper, but they reported Mr. Williams both to me and to Mr. Hutchin when that officer placed Ioane and his family in isolation. At Aitutaki Mr. Cameron has placed a man and woman on an island in the lagoon, in order to isolate them from the people of the island. This is, of course, a wise precaution only: it may be found that these people are not lepers, but merely sufferers from some little known skin-disease: but the isolation does not hurt them, and it saves the people generally from possible contagion.

SURVEY AND LAND TITLES COURT.

During the year ending the 31st March, 1907, the survey of Rarotonga has been nearly finished, and the small remaining section of Matavera is now in hand, so that by the month of June