

MEMORANDUM.

Cook and other Islands Administration, Wellington, 6th September, 1909.

THE annual reports of the Resident Commissioner at Rarotonga and Niue are attached hereto, together with a selection from the correspondence between the Government of New Zealand and those officers.

Lieut.-Colonel Gudgeon, C.M.G., who has been responsible for the administration of the Islands for the past eleven years, has now retired from the post of Resident Commissioner. Under his rule the Islands have made material progress, and I take this opportunity of placing on record my appreciation of the excellent services he has rendered.

REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE.

The finances of the Island Administration are in a sound position. In the Cook Islands the revenue for the year ended 31st March, 1909, amounted to £7,146 9s. 1d., an increase of £797 3s. over the preceding year. The expenditure for the same period amounted to £5,718 3s. 7d., a reduction of £471 10s. 6d. over the preceding year. The financial operations of the year, including the balance brought forward, resulted in a cash surplus of £5,011 18s. 4d.

In the Island of Niue the revenue for the year amounted to £1,809 8s. 11d., an increase of £191 0s. 5d. over the preceding year. The expenditure was £2,346 1s. 9d., an increase of £436 1s. 5d. over the preceding year. The increase in expenditure is mainly due to the amount expended on public works; but, in spite of this increase, the year closed with a credit balance of £1,206 8s.

These results must be regarded as extremely satisfactory, and show that the Islands are administered with prudence and economy.

TRADE, ETC.

The imports into the Cook Islands show a substantial increase; and, as usual, the bulk of the imports come from New Zealand. The value of the exports was £9,074 above the values for 1908.

The imports into Niue amounted to the value of £6,458, a decrease over the year 1907 of £2,033. The exports also fell off slightly; but the report of the Resident Commissioner deals fully with the causes of the decrease under both heads.

The exports of the two staple products of the Cook Islands, fruit and copra, show substantial increases. Since the inauguration of the direct-steamer service between Wellington and Rarotonga, the continual complaints, both from the Islands and the fruit-dealers in New Zealand, as to the unsatisfactory conditions under which the fruit trade was carried on, have ceased.

Last year a Fruit Inspector was detached from the Department of Agriculture, and sent down to Rarotonga. Some slight difficulties were met with at first; but the Inspector's powers have been defined by "The Fruit Inspection and Diseases Ordinance, 1909," and everything is now working smoothly.

Some strong feeling was exhibited against a proposal to treat the Cook Islands as subject to regulations governing the importation of fruit from places outside New Zealand. I was able, however, to convince the fruit-inspection authorities that the Cook Islands were, for the purposes of the regulations, an integral part of New Zealand, and that, therefore, fruit coming from the Islands was entitled to be treated as coming from one part of the Dominion to another.

EDUCATION.

I have not as yet been able to arrive at a solution of the problem of education in the Cook Islands. The Government of New Zealand is not prepared to take over and administer the whole education system, and there is no necessity for such a drastic change, as the mission authorities still continue the good work they have been doing in the past. An improvement could be effected in connection with the training of teachers for the village schools, and I hope to make some progress in this direction before long.

A school has been established at Niue, and was opened on the 10th August, 1909, with an attendance of sixty-four boys. Over two hundred pupils offered; but, unfortunately, all could not be taken. Arrangements are being made to take some thirty girls. Provision will also be made for technical training.

COMMUNICATION WITH NIUE.

A contract has been entered into for a schooner service with Niue, under which the schooner "Kereru" will make five trips per annum between Auckland and Niue. The subsidy to be paid is £100 per trip; and three trips have been made up to the present date. I believe that the service is giving satisfaction to the residents of Niue.

J. CARROLL.