

MANGAIA.

During the year it was found desirable to transfer Mr. J. C. Cameron, who was Resident Agent for the Island of Aitutaki, to Mangaia. Under his able guidance everything is running very smoothly.

It is hoped that the assistance which it is intended to give, by the distribution of plants and trees free of cost, will encourage the Natives to redouble their efforts in the cultivation and exporting of the fruit. The Natives of Mangaia have a very fine reputation of being hardworking and energetic, and they only require a sympathetic lead to induce them to produce a great deal more than they do at present.

At the time of writing the Engineer is superintending the work of blasting the reef passage to facilitate the boating of fruit to the steamer outside the reef. It is proposed to cut the passage about 400 ft. long from the beach to the edge of the reef, 10 ft. wide, and 5 ft. deep, making 741 cubic yards, of which about one-third, or, say, 250 cubic yards, has already been blasted. The cost of this passage to date amounts to £520. To complete it it will be necessary to renew the vote for £400 appearing on last year's estimates, making a total of £920. In view of this heavy expenditure it was deemed advisable to obtain from the Engineer a detailed statement upon the work, particulars of which will be found in his report.

AITUTAKI.

Mr. Percy Brown is now Resident Agent for this island.

It was found advisable to protect the fruit industry by taking a vote on this year's estimates for a sum of £480, for the construction of a fruit-shed and the laying-down of rails from the shed over the wharf. For particulars of this work see Engineer's report. Hitherto it has been the practice to pack the fruit in little Native huts dotted all over the island. On the day before the expected arrival of the steamer the fruit is carried to the wharf, where no shelter was provided to protect it from the rain; it might therefore remain, if the steamer happened to be late, for two days in a wet condition before shipment. This, of course, quite spoilt the fruit for market purposes. The shed will also be used for inward and outward cargo, and will be of great benefit to the copra industry. Shipmasters have a strong objection to shipping copra in a wet condition.

ATIU.

Major Large, who was transferred from Mangaia, is now Resident Agent at this island. The possibilities for the successful growing of fruit on Atiu are very good, and under the direction of a European Resident Agent good results are looked forward to in the near future.

The Union Steamship Company require a guarantee of at least 40 tons of cargo before they will call at Atiu, and it is hoped the time will soon arrive when its produce will increase to such an extent that such a guarantee will be unnecessary.

A post-office and money-order office was established during the year, and Major Large duly appointed Postmaster. This will, no doubt, materially assist the traders and planters in transacting their business with the outside world.

In despatch No. 164, dated the 29th March, Local Ordinance No. 1—to regulate village life within the island—was enclosed for the signature of His Excellency the Governor. The Ordinance was duly passed by the island Council, and approved of by the President, Major Large, and, no doubt, when it comes into force, will bear good results if well administered.

PENRRHYN.

From correspondence received from the Resident Agent, Mr. Hawk, it is gathered that everything is going on satisfactorily.

At the request of the Resident Agent and the Penrhyn Island Council, two Ordinances were prepared and passed, one being to regulate village life, and the other concerning the leper island of Morokai, both of which were forwarded with despatch No. 154, of the 15th March, for the signature of His Excellency the Governor.

In conclusion, I desire to tender to the officers of the Administration my thanks for the loyal support and services given to me by them during the year.

I have, &c.,

J. EMAN SMITH,

Resident Commissioner.

The Hon. James Carroll,

Minister in Charge, Cook Islands Administration, Wellington.