

might be used as it is mostly used at present—for the purposes of washing clothes—the new one to furnish the other necessary water for the people.

At Tautua the tank is also working well. Two lengths of 2 in. pipe are required to complete the job properly.

There are three passages into the Penrhyn Lagoon, at the north-east, west, and north-west. The western one is near the Settlement of Omoka, and is the one principally used. To improve this passage some twenty patches have to be blown away. When completed the passage will have at least 18 ft. of water all over at low tide. There are also some three or four patches in the north-east passage to remove. The whole work, I consider, could be done for £75.

The Penrhyn Natives want the leper-station shifted from Morokai (where it is at present) to Tekase, a motu on the western side of the north-west passage. Tekase is about 5 acres in area. The most of it is about 12 ft. above sea-level, but it is almost barren of vegetation, except a few coconut-palms, so I do not think it would suit as a leper-station.

There are three islands or motus between the western and north-western passages—Morokai, Tehaia, and Tekase.

The Natives complain that by giving Morokai as a leper-station they are losing too many coconuts. Morokai is about 30 acres in area, and covered with bearing coconut-palms.

The only island of the three which seems properly suited for a leper-station is Morokai, and I submit that this island be acquired for that purpose by the Government. Morokai might be properly fitted out as a leper-station, and the lepers of the whole Group put there.

We left Penrhyn on Thursday, the 11th June, for Palmerston, Aitutaki, and Rarotonga.

I have, &c.,
H. M. CONNAL, Engineer.

The Resident Commissioner.

REPORT OF FRUIT INSPECTOR.

THE work of inspection of fruit for export is proceeding smoothly, and although the orange shipments were heavy, the percentage of condemnations in New Zealand was light.

During the season Mr. Mark Estall was appointed Assistant Fruit Inspector, and his assistance, coupled with the services rendered by Instructor Taylor during the height of the orange season, greatly facilitated the work of inspection, and enabled the inspection to be executed with more care and thoroughness.

We are under a considerable disability as to the enforcement of the law, owing to the validity of the Ordinance having been attacked, and the point is not yet settled.

Competition.

The competition for the shield kindly donated by Mr. T. W. Kirk, F.L.S., Director of Orchards, &c., New Zealand, was keenly contested. The district of Ngatangia ultimately won it by the narrow margin of 5 points from Titikaveka, with Matavera a close third. On present indications the competition this season will again be keen.

This competition will do much to improve the packing of export fruit, and more competitions on similar lines should prove of benefit to our principal industry.

Other Islands.

Instructor Taylor has charge of the work in the outlying islands, and his report is attached.

Noxious Weeds.

I regret to report that the *Lantana camera* and *Xanthium strumarium* are rapidly spreading. Both these weeds are difficult of eradication, and the latter is poisonous to stock. Mr. Gordon, the Chief Inspector of Stock for Queensland, states that "its action is to induce paralysis of the heart, causing death without struggle, and apparently without pain. . . . Dr. Bancroft, of Brisbane, undertook experiments which conclusively proved the poisonous nature of the weed" (N.Z. Agric. Dept.'s Leaflet No. 5, by T. W. Kirk, Esq.). With regulations controlling the introduction of these pests, they could be eradicated when first detected without creating any hardship; but once they get a start in rich soil, and with the favourable climatic conditions in these Islands, eradication is a matter of considerable expense and difficulty.

Importation of Plants, Fruit, Second-hand Cases, &c.

This branch of work is an important one. We have only one species of fruit-fly (*Dacus raro-ton-gensis*), and so far have been lucky enough to escape the rhinoceros beetle (*Oryctes rhinoceros*), but once let this beetle or the Mediterranean fruit-fly (*Halterophora capitata*) get a start in this Group, and our citrus and copra industry will get a very severe check, if it be not ruined. Importers will be rendering the Islands of this Group a service in promptly informing us of any fruit, plants, or second-hand fruit-cases or second-hand sacks which may be consigned to them.

Depredations by Rats.

No systematic effort has apparently yet been made to check the ravages of this pest. It is obvious that some vigorous method will have to be adopted before long, no effective natural enemy being present; and, food being abundant, these rodents must thrive and increase, with disastrous results to plantations and stores, &c. Many people are averse to using poison, especially where children are