

Proposed Expenditure on Public Works during the Year ending 31st March, 1915.

Rarotonga—	£
Muri water-supply	500
Arorangi—Increasing size, and extending main pipes.. .. .	450
Roads and bridges—Maintenance	100
Upkeep of buildings	150
Experimental nursery	200
Avarua—School-teacher's residence	700
Education—School furniture, and the completion of Ngatangia and Arorangi teachers' residences	300
	2,400
Aitutaki—Bores for water	300
Mangaia—Tram-line from shed to landing	150
Manihiki—Tram-line from lagoon to sea	150
Takutea—Clearing coconuts	100
Total	<u>£3,100</u>

REPORT BY ENGINEER ON EFFECTS OF HURRICANE.

SIR,—

Rarotonga, 4th July, 1914.

I have the honour to submit this report of a trip round the northern islands of the Cook Group for the purpose principally of ascertaining the damage done by the hurricane of the 9th January last, to find out if the Natives at any of the islands were in want of food, and to report on any necessary public works.

We left Rarotonga in the schooner "Huanui" on Saturday night, the 4th April, after calling at Atiu, Mauke, Mitiaro, and Aitutaki. We left Aitutaki on Saturday night, the 11th April, for Palmerston.

Aitutaki.

At Aitutaki it now seems to me that the first work which should be undertaken is to concrete the top of the wharf.

I heard at Aitutaki that caterpillars are doing a lot of damage to the kumaras and other food-stuffs which have lately been planted. I would suggest, after our experience of the amount of good that has been done by birds in Rarotonga against insect pests, that minahs be imported into Aitutaki, and I think that the Government might assist towards this end.

Palmerston Islands.

We arrived at Palmerston on Monday, the 13th April. Palmerston does not seem to have suffered very much from the recent hurricane.

We left Palmerston on the 16th April for Pukapuka.

Pukapuka Islands.

We landed at the principal island of Pukapuka (of which there are three) on Friday, the 24th April, and found that the islands had been swept on the 9th January last by a hurricane. There was a very heavy sea which swept over the islands, and in the main island, where the settlement is, only left some seven houses standing, sweeping away all the rest.

The coconut-palms have not suffered much from the wind, but nearly all the coconuts have been blown off them and washed away, and it will be at least nine months from now before the Natives will be able to make copra. Their food-patches have been destroyed by the sea, and they also had some 40 tons of copra washed away. No lives were lost. There is no food on the islands except some coconuts, and without them the Natives would starve. Messrs. Jagger, Harvey, Millar, and Co. have now started a store there, which is well supplied with provisions.

I held two meetings with the head people. At the first, Ura (who seems to be the leading man), speaking for the people, asked that—(1) The Government give them some food; (2) as all their food-plants had been destroyed, that the Government send them some plants of taro, banana (Samoan, Mirio, and Maori), taro-taroa, kupe, and pumpkin.

In answer to the first I gave the Natives, on behalf of the Government, 1 ton of flour, $\frac{1}{2}$ ton of rice, and 10 bags of sugar, as that was the kind of food they wanted. I put the food under the charge of Mr. Neilson and Ura, to be divided out to the heads of the different taperes according to the number in each tapere. I suggest that more food be sent to them by first opportunity. And to the second, I told him that I would lay the matter before you, and I would suggest that plants be sent to them by the first opportunity.

On Saturday, the 25th April, I visited the largest island of the Group and found it infested with rats, which must do an enormous amount of damage to the young coconuts on the palms. I suggest that the Liverpool virus be employed there, for there cannot be the slightest risk to human life, as the