

There is a certain amount of syphilis and gonorrhoea in the Islands; but many cases which at first sight appear to be syphilitic are cases of yaws. In the lower islands there is much more to fear from the ravages of tuberculosis, which is very common here, as in all Natives races which are undergoing the ordeal of civilization.

I wish to draw attention to the great risk of danger to the health of the outer islands incurred by allowing labour-recruiting vessels access to them without first entering at Rarotonga. Leprosy was introduced to the Group by returned labour.

The health of Rarotonga has undoubtedly improved, and now that the new Act is in force I hope for further improvement. And what has been done here can be done in the other islands if the staff is increased as it requires.

G. PEARCE BALDWIN,
Chief Medical Officer.

TABLE SHOWING THE METEOROLOGICAL CONDITIONS AT RAROTONGA FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31ST DECEMBER, 1915.

Rainfall—	In.
Total for year	46·05
Average for past seventeen years	77·52
Barometer readings—	
Highest	30°·40
Lowest	29·36*
Thermometer readings—	
Highest	87·00
Lowest	48·00
Maximum	79·90
Minimum	68·70

* Lowest on record.

REPORT OF FRUIT INSPECTOR

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1916.

THE inspection of tomato plantations is now an important work, as careless propagation or cultivation will promote disease, and infection, under the favourable climatic conditions which prevail in Rarotonga, easily spreads, to the detriment of clean plantations. It is the intention of the Fruit Division to prosecute any grower who does not take precautions to eradicate disease when present in his plantation.

Pua-au Experimental Nursery.—Work on the Pua-au Experimental Nursery progressed steadily throughout the year until the month of March, when exceptional heavy rains blocked the main drains with rubble and debris. Practically the whole area was inundated; fortunately the principal drain was cleared, and the water drained off before much damage was done. The other drain, which drains the lagoon on east of Ngatipa Road, does not cope with the flow, consequently the water flows through the coral foundations of Ngatipa Road, and spreads over about 4 acres of the nursery. This area has been abandoned until ample drainage is assured. I suggest that another outlet be found for the water which drains into the lagoon on east of Ngatipa Road.

The following is a general list of trees at present growing in the nursery :—

215 citrus trees, budded varieties, comprising, oranges, mandarins, lemons, grape-fruit, tangerine, limes, and kumquat. Trees were procured from Florida, Queensland, and Victoria.

126 tropical fruits from India, Ceylon, and Hawaii.

285 Timber and ornamental trees and shrubs from India, Ceylon, Hawaii, and New Zealand.

100 Fiji commercial banana for growing shoots to distribute.

8,200 seedling oranges for propagating purposes.

The following is a list of plants and seeds, &c., distributed free of cost :—

113 tomatoes, in 1 lb. and 2 lb. lots, of approved varieties, distributed for seed.

336 tomato-plants in lots of six for variety testing purposes.

32 plants of tropical fruits.

10,200 kumara-plants, selected local and New Zealand varieties.

140 Fiji commercial banana shoots, mostly in lots of five.

Collections of seeds have also been forwarded to many of the other islands in the group.

The native variety of kumara has seriously deteriorated; hence the selection and importation of new varieties for propagation and distribution.

Varieties of corn or maize have also been grown, and the seed liberally distributed.

Seventeen new varieties of tomatoes were grown and tested for commercial purposes. Forty-two varieties have now been tested. The varieties recommended as the most suitable to grow for export are Sutton's Eclipse—average yield of commercial fruit per twenty plants, 8·7 lb. per plant; Sutton's Satisfaction, similar; Trucker's Favourite, 7·8 lb.; Holmes's Supreme, 6·7 lb. Many other varieties had heavier yields—four varieties averaging over 10 lb. per plant—but owing to the roughness of the fruit