

The portion of the main road between the Hospital and Messrs. A. B. Donald's store—about two miles—has always been regarded as the particular care of the Administration, and in order to show the Natives that the Administration was willing to put its own house in order before asking them to do anything for themselves, and to give them an idea of what the roads should be like, the Resident Commissioner set out to repair and crown this portion. When this work was completed he opened a campaign, taking "self-help" as his text. It is not necessary to go through an account of this campaign step by step, but after considerable opposition large numbers of Natives in every district turned out to work on the roads—the Natives doing the work and the Administration providing trucks and benzine and food for the workers. On one day alone in one district 274 men turned out to work. This continued until the whole road was put into first-class order, which was accomplished by the end of January. Some of the side roads, too, have been repaired, and new roads formed on the same basis—viz., the Natives doing the work and the Administration providing food for the men and benzine for the trucks. Though much remains to be done, there is now no need to feel ashamed of the state of the roads in Rarotonga.

In this connection also the Resident Commissioner records his appreciation of the indefatigable efforts of Mr. E. A. Reid, the Acting Superintendent of Public Works, who organized the labour gangs and carried out the superintendence of the work.

NATIVE FRUITGROWERS.

In January last a number of Natives who had assisted the Administration with repair work on the roads asked in return to be assisted with their fruit export. This was agreed to, and a company was formed under the control and general superintendence of Mr. E. A. Reid, with books and accounts kept in the Treasury.

The operations to the present, though merely experimental in their nature, have proved entirely satisfactory. There are now five branches in the different villages, and applications to join one or other of these branches are of almost daily occurrence. Owing to lack of space in steamers, however, it is not at present possible to admit any more members. The Resident Commissioner is convinced that, managed on present lines and given sufficient space on steamers, these companies could take over a very large proportion of the fruit-export trade, and that without any chance of loss to the Administration. The companies, too, are not in conflict with the traders, since all fruit intended for export is first offered to the traders and fruit-buyers, and is shipped on consignment only if no satisfactory price can be obtained for it locally.

The following account shows operations to date, and speaks for itself :—

Total shipment from March to July, 1922 : Oranges, 2,595 cases ; bananas, 1,452 cases : total, 4,047 cases.

				£	s.	d.
Gross proceeds of total shipments	..	..	..	1,416	14	8
Less expenses—				£	s.	d.
Shooks	..	..	..	433	1	10
Nails	..	..	..	28	0	0
Nailing and cartage	..	..	..	57	19	5
				519	1	3
				897	13	5
Less withdrawals by Natives on account	..	..	..	136	5	5
Balance in Treasury	..	..	..	£761	8	0

When in Aitutaki and Mangaia the Resident Commissioner was asked to extend the benefit of the new companies to these places, and promised that the matter would be taken into consideration in time, if possible, to do so next year.

TELEPHONE SYSTEM.

For the past two years there has been trouble with the telephone-line. The wire in use was too fine, and was constantly being broken by falling coconut-leaves. The posts, too—sapling ironwoods—were found to be rotting at the ground-level, and were constantly falling. In spite of continual repairs the line was almost always down in one place or another, and indications pointed to increasing troubles. With a view to ascertaining whether it was possible to do anything short of taking in and reconstructing the greater part of the line, a member of the wireless staff went over the route and reported, and as a consequence the wire was taken in from Muri to the Titikaveka end on the one hand, and from the wireless station to the Arorangi end on the other hand.

The lines in the township of Avarua, and from the post-office to the wireless station, are still being kept up, but one of the first works to be undertaken by the Administration should be the reconstruction of these lines with proper and suitable wire and posts.

EXPERIMENTAL NURSERY.

Owing to the duties that have devolved upon him by reason of his taking over the Public Works Department, Mr. E. A. Reid has not been able to give the time he would have liked to this important branch of the Administration's activities. Under Mr. Reid's supervision, however, the general work of the nursery has been carried on by a Native foreman.