

1925.
NEW ZEALAND.

COOK AND OTHER ISLANDS.

[In continuation of Parliamentary Paper A.—3, 1924.]

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

MEMORANDUM.

Cook Islands Department, Wellington, 26th May, 1925.

SUMMARIES of the annual reports of the Cook Islands and Niue Administrations are attached hereto.

Trade returns for the past year disclose a very satisfactory condition in Rarotonga, both the exports and total trade constituting a record. Niue Island was not so fortunate, owing to a dislocation of trade through the loss at the Chatham Islands of the contract steamer "Rama."

All efforts to arrange for private enterprise to take up the running of the "Rama" failed, and the Government has decided to recondition the N.Z.G.S. "Hinemoa" and place her in the Niue service. Though the "Hinemoa" is rather small for the trade, it is hoped that she will be the means of solving the ever-recurring difficulties of a regular connection that have surrounded this service in the past. It will also give to the island that continuity and regularity of service so essential to the fostering of a fruit industry. It was necessary on the loss of the "Rama" to arrange a special trip to Niue by the N.Z.G.S. "Tutanekai" with supplies sufficient to carry over the hurricane season.

Wireless stations were erected during the year at the Islands of Aitutaki, Mangaia, and Niue, and have been staffed and efficiently run by Cook-Islanders trained in New Zealand. A receiving set has also been installed at the Island of Atiu, and will be completed later with a transmitter. These stations have proved of inestimable value to trade and shipping by making known to planters and traders the dates upon which the steamers would call, and have broken down the long periods of isolation through the hurricane season of past years.

An effort is being made to eliminate the present heavy waste in fruit shipments arriving in New Zealand from the Cook Group. There are two necessities to this—i.e., better shipping facilities, and improved methods of picking and packing the fruit. A fruit-packing-shed system has been inaugurated, by means of which the fruit can be stored for sufficient time before packing to allow bruises and defects to manifest themselves before shipment takes place, and it is hoped by this means to remove one of the weaknesses of the present system.

During the year the Resident Commissioner, Rarotonga—Judge H. F. Ayson—paid a visit to the isolated islands of the Northern Cook Group, and found the health of the people generally good and other conditions more or less satisfactory. As a result of his visit it has been decided to appoint at the Island of Pukapuka a European Resident Agent, who will also act as school-teacher.

I desire to place on record my appreciation of the long and excellent services rendered by Messrs. Guy N. Morris, Resident Commissioner, Niue; J. C. Evison, Superintendent of Schools, Rarotonga; and Dr. R. S. Trotter, Chief Medical Officer, Rarotonga, whose pending retirements from the Islands service I very much regret.

M. POMARE,
Minister for the Cook Islands.