

Valentine was most sympathetic in his attitude towards both European and Native teachers, who were reinspired with confidence and faith in the value of the difficult work which they are undertaking.

"Separate school for European pupils established in Avarua: A valuable report on conditions in our schools and suggestions for their improvement was an important outcome of Mr. Valentine's visit. Among many other recommendations was the separation of the teaching of European and Native pupils. The difference in the curriculum of New Zealand and that of Cook Islands in both subject-matter and difficulty has rendered the co-education of the children a matter of great difficulty. As a result both European and Maori children were hindered in their progress. It is cause for great satisfaction that the separate teaching of the children has now been approved.

"*Visit of Their Excellencies.*—During May, 1926, all schools in the southern islands were visited by Their Excellencies Sir Charles and Lady Alice Fergusson. The occasion was one which will be long remembered by both teachers and children. The simple language, the homely acts, and the friendly interest of Their Excellencies gave the children a living sense of the bonds that hold even the little Maori a faithful servant of the Empire.

"*Conclusion.*—The annual report gives an opportunity of paying due tribute to the services being rendered to the cause of education by the European teachers. However enthusiastic the teacher may be there are times when his ideals are weighed down by a sense of disappointment—even of futility. The impact of so many disturbing factors, with their elusive and baffling effects on the Native child's mind, cannot fail occasionally to dim the ardour of the most optimistic. As a confirmed believer in the value of education to the Polynesian folk, I take the opportunity of assuring the administration of the efficient service and the unselfish devotion being rendered by the European teachers to the welfare of the children of the Cook Islands."

PUBLIC WORKS.

The following are the principal works carried out by this Department during the year:—

Hospital.—The alterations and extensions to the main hospital building were finished in May.

Beacons.—A new triangular beacon was erected on the reef near Donald's store. All beacons are now permanently in their positions as instructed by the Commodore Commanding the New Zealand Station.

Roads and Bridges.—The permanent gang has been continuously employed keeping the main road round the island in repair. This gang is equipped with a complete portable tramway with two tip-trucks, and two transport lorries and trailer, and a further lorry is under order. Extensive damage to the approaches of several of the bridges was caused by a cloud-burst in December, and these were repaired as expeditiously as possible. Several of the wooden bridges on the main road were erected many years ago and were intended only for the light traffic at that time, but with the advent of motor-cars and motor-trucks stronger structures are required. Some of the small wooden bridges have been replaced by reinforced-concrete culverts, but in some cases, where the flow of storm-water is too great for culverts of this class, reinforced bridges must be built. The large wooden bridges, if not replaced by reinforced structures, will have to be considerably strengthened, and this work cannot long be delayed. The small wooden bridge at Parekura was replaced by a reinforced culvert. Eight small reinforced culverts were built between Avana Bridge and Muri to cope with flood-waters from the hills.

Titikaveka Culvert: As the Titikaveka Recreation-ground was subject to flooding by storm-water, the people of that district cut a drain through the main road to the sea. This necessitated a cut of 7 chains in length and 10 ft. in depth. A reinforced culvert was built in the cut through the road.

Connal's bridge has been strengthened by new sets of piles resting in concrete, but much still requires to be done to make this bridge completely safe for the heavy traffic which we now have on the main road.

Taylor's bridge has been strengthened by two new lines of stringers, and new sets of piles in concrete have also been built. During the coming year another set of piles will be put in together with retaining walls.

Water-supply.—The cloud-burst above mentioned seriously damaged the water-mains in the different districts, the settlements of Ngatangia, Matavera, Muri, and Arorangi being cut off for five days. The Avatiu and Arorangi mains were broken and carried as far as 25 chains, and the intakes were twisted, broken, and buried in the debris. The strainers were also carried away, and the Arorangi one lost, apparently buried under rocks, &c. With the exception of Avatiu, the mains have all been repaired. Pipes for the Avatiu main are due to arrive, and it is hoped to have this supply connected up with the Avarua main, of which it is an auxiliary, at an early date.

Survey Office Building.—The northern end of this building and 15 ft. of each side wall had to be pulled down and rebuilt, as it was in a state of collapse. The roof was also repaired and painted.

Wireless Station.—The veranda on the western end of the assistant operator's residence has been hooded.

Prison.—The old piles under the main building collapsed, and these were replaced by concrete piles, with a concrete wall-foundation under the outer walls. The back wall bordering on the prison yard was raised to the same height as the prison-yard wall—viz., 12 ft.

Amongst the minor works carried out at Rarotonga are construction of the new class-room, 30 ft. by 20 ft., at the Avarua School; repairs to teachers' residences at Avarua, Ngatangia, Arorangi, and Titikaveka; the thorough repair and renovation of the house recently purchased for the Assistant Medical Officer; the reflooring of the kitchen at the Government Accommodation-house, and other minor alterations to the main building and repainting of several of the rooms. At the police residence an additional septic-tank has been built, and improvements, including painting throughout, made to the house itself.