

who on account of weather and other conditions have been unable to land and procure stamps of these islands. Arrangements have also been made for the sale of Cook Islands stamps at the office of the High Commissioner in London.

“*Telephones.*—The service continues to give satisfaction, and during the year several new subscribers have been connected with the Exchange.

“*Staff.*—During the year Mr. J. C. Cameron, Postmaster, Mangaia, resigned, and his position was filled by the appointment of Mr. J. McGruther.”

WIRELESS.

During the year Mr. L. G. Emens, Superintendent, Radio Station, completed his term of office and returned to New Zealand. Mr. S. A. Heginbotham was promoted to the position of Superintendent.

Application has been made to the Government for a vote to cover the cost of installing a modern low-powered high-frequency transmitter for Rarotonga, which will enable us to get direct communication with New Zealand and other distant stations at reduced cost to the public. We also hope to be in a position shortly to erect a station at the Island of Mauke. This is badly needed, especially during the fruit season.

The following are extracts from the annual report of the Superintendent of the Radio Station :—

“Wireless communication has been efficiently maintained throughout the year with all radio-stations concerned. The radio-substations at Aitutaki, Mangaia, and Atiu continue to give efficient service.

“In September last we established short-wave communication with Samoa and Tahiti on a short-wave transmitting-set. Although this transmitter is a very low-powered one, we find it preferable to our spark transmitter for disposing of the traffic. Its installation has enabled us to maintain continuous communication with these stations, which would otherwise have been impossible, owing to the abnormal atmospheric conditions at times experienced.

“The installation of a higher-powered short-wave transmitter would enable this station to communicate with New Zealand direct. If this could be arranged it would be possible to reduce the radio rates, which would undoubtedly result in an increase of traffic.

“A new set of storage batteries are on order, costing approximately £200. These are expected to be on hand within the next few weeks, and will replace the present ones, which have reached the end of their usefulness.

“The liberal broadcast of free press news from Wellington has enabled us to keep the inhabitants of these islands well informed regarding current events.

“Five applications for amateur receiving licenses were received and approved.”

FRUIT INDUSTRY AND AGRICULTURE.

For some time the Administration has been endeavouring to improve the quality and pack of fruit exported from these islands, and to place the industry on such a sound basis that we will be in a position to compete with California and Australia in the orange market, and with Fiji in respect of bananas. To further this object a Conference was held at Rarotonga at the end of last month, presided over by the Hon. Minister for the Cook Islands, who, with Mr. S. J. Smith, of the Cook Islands Department, came from New Zealand especially for this purpose. The Conference was attended by the Resident Commissioner and the Director of Agriculture, representing the Administration; delegates from the New Zealand fruit-merchants; and local representatives of all branches of the industry.

After amicable discussions, important decisions were arrived at, the main one being that all fruit should be graded and packed in district packing-sheds under the control and supervision of Inspectors to be appointed by the Administration. The Native growers agreed to erect the sheds and do all in their power to assist in the matter of improving our trade. Seven sheds have been agreed upon, and committees of six influential Natives, with an Ariki or member of the Island Council as chairman, have been elected to see that the sheds are erected, and to assist in the management thereof. Packers for each shed are at present being trained by the Fruit Department, so that when the orange season commences each shed will have the services of skilled packers. The Administration is obtaining the services of additional Inspectors from the Department of Agriculture, New Zealand, to assist in the work of inspection and supervision at the sheds during the orange season. The present system of inspection at the wharf during shipment will only be carried out as a check. The scheme of having one large shed in each district, under the supervision of an Inspector, assisted by the Shed Committee, and also having a trained staff of packers for each shed, should make a marked improvement in the quality and pack of fruit for export. A weakness will appear in the scheme should the Natives not stand together and completely fulfil the requirements of the Administration in regard to the packing-sheds, in which event the Government will step in and control its own packing-sheds.

“*Group Islands.*—Inspectors made several visits to the Group Islands during last season. At Mangaia there is a noticeable improvement in the packing, but the practice of using cases made from split native timber should be discontinued. This island should rank next to Rarotonga in its fruit