

export, but, mainly owing to rough handling and the use of indifferent cases, there is little or no demand for Mangaian fruit. The best tomatoes in the Group are grown on this island, and bananas of excellent quality can also be produced. Mauke has also made an improvement in the pack of oranges; but looseness is still the principal defect. At Atiu the packing is very indifferent. Looseness is general, and undergrade fruit is too evident. The fruit is of good quality, and only requires more care in handling and packing. The Aitutaki oranges do not contain as much moisture as the Rarotongan, and are therefore better carriers. The fruit from this island is the best packed in the Group. This, I think, is due to the method adopted by the buyers and traders of purchasing the fruit in bulk at the sheds, and having the work of grading and packing carried out under their personal supervision. The system is to be commended, as the Native growers are paid a very fair price for their fruit, and once the oranges are delivered to the sheds the grower's responsibility ceases, and the packing, case, and space problems do not trouble them. The purchasing in bulk affords an excellent opportunity of having the whole consignment packed to a uniform standard.

"*Crops*.—The orange crop in Rarotonga will be a heavy one for the incoming season. Bananas have not been extensively planted. Tomatoes have received considerable attention, and, provided the weather is not too warm and humid, the crop should be a heavy one. Kumaras, taro, and domestic crops have been largely planted, mainly through the efforts of the Au Vaine, or Women's Committees.

"*New Zealand Market*.—During the past few months the quality and pack of Rarotongan bananas have been excellent, and the fruit has been shipped in a green and good condition, but on arrival in New Zealand the markets have frequently been supplied by shipments from Fiji landed only a day or so previously. This has occasioned very heavy loss to the local growers, and is very discouraging to them after giving the fruit so much labour and attention.

"*Experimental Nursery*.—The varieties of citrus-trees imported from New Zealand and planted out are in most cases growing well. These trees are worked on different varieties of stocks, and are being carefully watched to see which stocks are the most suitable for such of the Rarotongan soils as are low-lying. The mango-trees, especially the varieties Tahitian No. 1, Tomato Mango of India, Langra Bensari, and the Honey Mango of Ceylon, all carried heavy crops. The fruit was of excellent quality and flavour. Several consignments were forwarded to New Zealand. The varieties of Avocado were also fully laden with fruit. Although many boxes were shipped to New Zealand, this fruit does not appear to gain favour with the New Zealand public. No doubt when its virtues are more widely known there will be a demand for it. Over three hundred mango-seedlings have been raised for stocks, on which will be grafted selected varieties for distribution.

"A large collection of varieties of Hawaiian kumaras were again planted, mainly for the purpose of raising cuttings for distribution. The Queensland arrowroot is now nearing maturity, and indications show that there will be a heavy crop. The turmeric and commercial ginger have been very slow in growing, mainly owing to the dry weather at the time of planting. Sufficient should be available for replanting and testing for commercial purposes.

"All the citrus-trees have been pruned, and, generally speaking, are in a healthy state of growth. The bearing-trees, with the exception of the grape-fruit, are carrying good crops. About forty lemon-seedlings have been budded to replace trees which have failed to grow.

"Two varieties of orange are worthy of note—viz., the Washington Navel and the Siletta. These were originally imported from Florida and Victoria respectively. Until recently the Washington Navels were inclined to be rather thick-skinned and generally very coarse; but as the trees are now reaching maturity the prospects for the fruit are very much better. The outstanding features are the thin skin, flavour, and keeping-qualities. The Siletta has the same advantages as the Washington Navel, but it ripens later in the season.

"All the ploughable sections have been kept in a good state of tilth, and the citrus-trees have been frequently hand cultivated. At present the schoolboys' section is planted in maize between the rows of citrus-trees.

"Two hundred young pawpaw (*Carica Papaya*) have been planted out for the purpose of securing sufficient marketable papain to test for commercial purposes.

"The West African oil-palms (*Elæis Guineensis*), although healthy, are very slow in growing. They were planted out over three years ago. The commercial-sago palms (*Metroxylon Sagu*), planted three years ago, are making excellent growth, and will soon be amongst the most noticeable plants in the nursery.

"The seven Mangosteen and three durian plants which survived after the long trip from the Dutch East Indies are growing slowly. No doubt as they become established the growth will be more rapid.

"The following is a list of plants distributed from the nursery during the year, free of charge: 20 lb. of arrowroot tubers, 100 Manihot cuttings, 160 Dracena cuttings, 140 bamboo, 20 breadfruit trees or suckers, unlimited Hibiscus cuttings, 60 orange seedlings, 2,500 cuttings of Hawaiian kumaras, 30 Cococ plumosa palms, 20 Caffra plums, 15 Indian plums, 24 Avocado pears, 10 Brazilian cherries, 10 grafted mangoes, 12 Nephelium, large supply of Croton and Escallonia cuttings, 40 *Poinciana regia*, 20 *Bauhinia tomentosa*, 40 pimento, 45 Indian laburnum, 35 Malabar chestnuts, 25 spathodia or fountain-trees, 22 Panama pawpaw, 10 Cochin goraka, 5 Cashew nuts, 24 banana-shoots.

"*Noxious Weeds*.—The enforcement of the regulations has occasioned considerable work, and a great deal of patience has had to be exercised in many cases in having the provisions carried out. Frequent visits have been made around the island, and where noxious weeds have been found owners have been served with notices to eradicate such weeds. Altogether sixty-five notices were served during the year, and thirty persons were summoned and convicted.