

PACKING-SHEDS AND FRUIT-INSPECTION.

Work in the packing-sheds has proceeded smoothly throughout the year. All graders have been fitted with packing-bins, so that oranges can be packed direct from the graders, thus obviating a considerable amount of handling. Two extra graders, elevator conveyers, and engines are now on hand for the Arorangi and Avatiu sheds, and these will greatly facilitate the work of handling the large quantities of fruit passing through these sheds. All the village packing-sheds have been repaired and put in order for the coming season by the Native growers.

Prosecutions.—During the year twenty-eight growers were prosecuted for breaches of the Fruit Regulations, principally for improper packing.

Regulations.—The Fruit Regulations have been amended to prohibit the shipment of oranges of sizes $3\frac{1}{4}$ in. (112), $3\frac{3}{8}$ in. (96), and $3\frac{1}{2}$ in. (80), and tomatoes under the grade of 2 in.

Group Islands.—The Native growers in the Islands of Mangaia, Atiu, and Mauke are following on the lines of Rarotonga, and concentrating in village sheds the work of handling and packing oranges for export. They propose to control and work the sheds on the lines in operation in Rarotonga. An Inspector visited Mangaia and conducted classes in handling and packing oranges, and supervised the work of preparing the first shipment. During August he was stationed in Mauke, and organized the work of the three new district sheds. He also gave packing demonstrations. Another Inspector spent a month in Atiu. The new village sheds came under his attention, and the work of control was organized as far as possible. Both Inspectors reported favourably on the keen interest taken in the packing classes, especially by the school-children, the majority of the senior children proving very apt pupils.

Parasites.—The parasites (chalcid flies) which were taken to Aitutaki to combat the citrus scale are doing excellent work. The orange-trees which were dying are now in strong growth and are rapidly recovering from the depredations of the citrus-scale.

EXPERIMENTAL NURSERY.

The experimental area has been kept in a good state of cultivation throughout the year. Owing to the financial stringency, the previous policy of maintaining the Experimental Farm purely for experimental purposes has been altered, and part of the area will be devoted to producing revenue to assist to meet the expenditure incurred on the farm itself. An acre and a half has also been planted in annatto, with a view to meeting the New Zealand demand for this commodity for cheese-colouring purposes.

The experimental and propagation work is being continued on a limited scale, and the following plants were distributed during the year: Budded citrus, 423; grafted mangoes, 157; passions, 128; cashew-nuts, 14; pimento, 28; palms, 68; cassias, 22; coffee (*Excelsa*), 178; Malabar nuts, 6; proteas, 12; bamboo shoots, 112; kumara cuttings, 900; banana shoots (northern islands), 300; breadfruit, 180; orange seedlings, 20.

Agricultural Classes.—The Experimental Nursery was used for instruction and practical lessons by the school-teachers and students. The lessons during the year dealt solely with "Plant-propagation," as under: Propagation by seed; propagation by seed-boxes and soil; propagation by cuttings; propagation by layering; propagation by grafting; propagation by budding; propagation by inarching; propagation by planting of citrus; care of young plants; planting of banana shoots and selection; monthly planting notes; cultivation.

NOXIOUS WEEDS.

Eighty-eight occupiers of land were prosecuted for failing to keep their land free of weeds.

HIGH COURT.

RAROTONGA.

Criminal and Civil Jurisdiction.—In Rarotonga for the year ended 31st March, 1931, the High Court dealt with 1,039 cases of criminal offences and breaches of regulations and local Ordinances, and fifty-eight civil cases.

LOWER GROUP AND NORTHERN ISLANDS.

In the Lower Group and Northern Islands the Resident Agents, who are Commissioners of the High Court with limited jurisdiction, held regular sittings throughout the year.

NATIVE LAND COURT.

The following cases were dealt with by the Court during the year: Succession, 78; confirmation of leases, 2; tribal title, 1: total, 81.

As the duties of the Resident Commissioner and Chief Judge of both High Court and Native Land Court are combined, and although as much time as possible is devoted to it, it is not possible to cope satisfactorily with arrears of Land Court work.

In order that the Native Land Court may complete the work commenced in the Northern Islands, as mentioned in last report, arrangements have been made for a surveyor from New Zealand to proceed to the Northern Group during the forthcoming year to survey the coast-lines of Penrhyn and Manihiki and to lay off district boundaries.