

banana, breadfruit, and other food crops. Two-thirds of the orange crop were also lost, and coconut-trees suffered severe damage. It was found necessary to send from Rarotonga relief supplies of rice and flour, and the Natives of Rarotonga also donated many tons of Native foodstuffs. At Rarotonga the loss was 40 per cent. of the banana crop and one-third of the orange crop, but, fortunately, there was no damage to domestic crops. A report from a passing vessel stated that Palmerston Island was badly damaged by the hurricane, but no particulars are yet available. It will be remembered that this island was entirely devastated by a hurricane in 1926. Reports from other islands of the Lower and Northern Group show that, whilst a heavy gale and seas were experienced, no material damage was done, except at Mauke, where a tidal wave, following the wake of the hurricane, broke over the east and north coasts and did considerable damage to the landing-places.

LOWER COOK GROUP.

AITUTAKI.

Health.—Health conditions have been fair, but the infrequency of visits of doctors has thrown too much work and responsibility upon the island nurse.

Trade.—Exports: Copra, 416½ tons; oranges, 25,771 cases; other fruits, 80 cases; arrowroot, 8 tons.

Crops and Planting Returns.—The following table shows plantings for the half-year ended 31st March, 1931:—

Kumara	..	..	128,893	Arrowroot	..	..	45,082	Bananas	..	..	4,724
Taro	..	..	17,346	Tarotarua	..	..	5,836	Pines	..	..	4,801
Melons	..	..	1,566	Corn	..	..	877				

The hurricane in February destroyed nearly all crops. All Natives over the age of sixteen went to work with a will planting and clearing ground ready for planting, and many hundreds of plants were sent from Rarotonga to relieve the position. There has never been more planting done on the island than at present. Tapioca imported from Fiji and yams imported from Tonga are doing well.

Roads and Public Works.—A good deal of metalling and new roadwork has been carried out.

All buildings, including schools and Courthouse, have been kept in good repair; boats have been kept in first-class order.

Water.—The pumps fitted to the village wells have been overhauled, new parts fitted where necessary, and all water-supplies have been maintained in good order.

Wharf and Cargo-sheds.—A new cargo-shed, with capacity for storing 1,000 cases of fruit, has been erected, and will greatly facilitate work during shipment of fruit and copra. It was wired down, and withstood the hurricane.

Court Returns.—259 cases under the criminal jurisdiction and 10 civil cases were dealt with.

ATIU.

Agriculture.—Planting: Throughout the year there has been sufficient planting to meet all domestic needs. Owing to the poor demand for copra, the nuts have been utilized for planting larger permanent areas. With the ending of the orange season, weeding and planting companies have been formed in each district and are doing good work.

Agricultural exports: The orange season was fairly satisfactory—9,292 cases exported. Average output has been maintained. The average net price received by growers was 2s. 6d. per case. Copra exports for the period of six months were the lowest on record, only 66 tons being exported. The reason for this is, of course, the present market depression. Following are the exports of oranges for the past five seasons: 1926, 9,102 cases; 1927, 14,509 cases; 1928, 9,217 cases; 1929, 12,802 cases; 1930, 9,292 cases.

Health.—The health of the people has been satisfactory and there has been no sickness of an epidemic nature. A Maori nurse from the Rarotonga Hospital remained on the island for a month in July and gave treatment for yaws. The Assistant Medical Officer visited the island once.

The Village Health Committees established a few years ago continue to do valuable work. Village inspections are held at regular intervals.

Public Works.—*Roads:* The new coast road has been continued, and now links up the Ngatiarua, Teenui, and Mapumai district sections. The new road runs through difficult *makatea* (upraised coral) country, and progress is therefore slow. The metalling of the main road from the Port of Taunganui inland has been continued, 351 tons of new metal having been laid during the past six months. A gap of only 7 chains remains, and this will be completed before the end of the year. This all-weather road was much appreciated during the fruit season just closed; oranges were carted to the port in rainy weather, which has been impossible in the past owing to the red-clay country traversed by the road.

Public buildings: Minor repairs have been made to public buildings and tanks as required.

General.—In May, 1930, Rongomatane Kea Ariki died, and was succeeded by his eldest son, Mataio Kea. In September following, Rongomatane Mataio Ariki was accidentally killed whilst on a visit to Rarotonga, and Maka Kea, a brother of the deceased, was elected to the office of Rongomatane Ariki.