

1931.
NEW ZEALAND.

COOK AND OTHER ISLANDS.

[In continuation of Parliamentary Paper A.-3, 1930.]

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

MEMORANDUM.

Cook Islands Department, 20th June, 1931.

I SUBMIT the annual report of the Cook Islands and Niue Administrations for the year ended 31st March, 1931.

The year under review has been a difficult one not only on account of the very heavy slump in the world's copra-markets, but also on account of heavy damage sustained in several islands of the Group through severe cyclonic conditions. Subsidies, as usual, were granted from Consolidated Fund in order to carry out the Government's comprehensive policy in regard to such services as public health, education, and wireless, for which the Territories' limited resources cannot provide.

A most pleasing feature of the year's operations is the increase in birth-rate of the Native population, which reached the high rate of 19·73 per thousand.

The existing financial depression is manifesting itself in the Territory, and copra—the mainstay of the people—is practically unsaleable in the world's markets.

Attention is drawn to the inclusion, in the published accounts, of the subsidies granted from Consolidated Fund towards essential public services, which in former years have been paid direct from the New Zealand Government accounts. This has the effect of showing in these accounts the total expenditure on the Territory without the need for reference to other parliamentary papers.

In keeping with the reductions being imposed in New Zealand on account of the financial depression, the Islands Administration services have been seriously curtailed, but, in the absence of extraordinary expenditure being necessary on account of storm damage, the coming year may be looked forward to with some degree of confidence.

A. T. NGATA,
Minister for the Cook Islands.