

MIGRATION.

The following return shows the migration to and from Rarotonga for the period 1st April, 1935, to the 31st March, 1936 :—

Arrivals—Europeans : 146 males, 116 females. *Natives* : 40 males, 39 females.

Departures—Europeans : 140 males, 112 females. *Natives* : 28 males, 33 females.

EDUCATION.

As the year under review is the twentieth anniversary of the opening of the first Government school in the Cook Islands, it will not be out of place to review some of the principal achievements in educational matters during the past decade.

Prior to 1915 the only assistance towards education given by the Cook Islands Administration was a small grant to the London Missionary Society to assist in maintaining the Tereora School, which was a boarding-school for both boys and girls.

In Rarotonga and throughout the Cook Group the London Missionary Society had from early mission days made itself responsible for educating the Native people, and had established schools in every island of both the Lower Group and the Northern Group.

The pupils were taught in the vernacular, principally by Native pastors, and the teaching of English had not been introduced, except to a small extent in islands where a European Missionary was stationed.

In 1914 the New Zealand Government decided to introduce a system of education into the Cook Group, and to send European teachers to take over the schools. The London Missionary Society and the Natives agreed to hand over to the Government all school-buildings, and the land they were built on, for educational purposes.

The Cook Islands Act, 1915, empowered the Minister of the Cook Islands to establish such public schools in the Cook Islands as he might deem necessary for the education of the Native or other inhabitants thereof.

In 1916 regulations were made under the provisions of the Cook Islands Act, 1915, requiring all children between the ages of six and fourteen to attend school.

In 1915 the first public school was opened under a European teacher at Arorangi (Rarotonga) with an attendance of 113 pupils. Four boys and three girls knew a few words of English, and the remainder knew no English at all.

The importance of elementary agriculture and technical work was recognized from the commencement.

In 1916 a second school was opened at Ngatangia (Rarotonga) with 194 pupils, and at Avarua (Rarotonga) a third school with an attendance of 236 (roll now 500) was opened early in 1918. A large Native school was then in operation at the Island of Aitutaki, at which 270 pupils (roll now 450) were taught entirely by Native teachers.

A small Native school was also opened at Palmerston Island in 1918.

The teaching of English, reading, writing, and arithmetic up to the New Zealand requirements of Standard 4, and a practical training in agriculture, woodwork, &c., was then the aim of the Administration.

The cost of education in 1917 was £3,077.

Two years later—1919—the remaining islands of the Lower Group were being served by schools taught by Natives.

A technical school was established in Rarotonga with classes in agriculture, drawing, woodwork, and an advanced class in carpentry. In most of the schools classes were held for simple cookery, hat and basket weaving. Three scholarships for annual competition were granted at St. Stephens School for Maori boys in Auckland, and in addition four advanced pupils were apprenticed to trades in New Zealand.

In the year 1922 rules for the management of public schools and a school syllabus were brought into use. The syllabus embraced English, arithmetic, gardening, nature study, handicraft, health, singing, patriotism and citizenship, and moral and physical instruction.

There were then (1922) four Government schools in Rarotonga and four in the Lower Group, all under European teachers, with a total attendance of 1,300 pupils.

By 1925 the Northern Islands had been brought into the educational scheme through the medium of the London Missionary Society, which was annually subsidized to the extent of £500 for supplying Native teachers to carry on the work in these remote islands.

The cost in 1925 had risen to £9,301.

By 1928 the roll numbers throughout the Group had reached 2,146 pupils, and the system had reached a fair state of efficiency and completeness as the following extracts from the Annual Reports of the Cook Islands show :—

Annual Report 1926, Page 8 : “ The need for a comprehensive and co-ordinated policy for the education of Natives in the South Seas Islands has long been recognized, and advantage was taken of the presence in New Zealand during the year of educational experts from Fiji, Samoa, and the Cook Islands to confer with the authorities in New Zealand on this important subject. This conference was held in Wellington in January last, and after full discussion of all relevant matters the following policy was decided upon :—

“ (1) That instruction should be closely related to the Native environment and tradition.

“ (2) Nothing should be taught that is not serviceable to the Natives in their present social state, or is not likely to be serviceable in the near future.