

GROUP.

During the year the Chief Judge periodically visited all Lower Group Islands and dealt with the more serious cases on the criminal side which were reserved for hearing by him, and also all civil cases and applications for divorce.

In Rarotonga and the Lower Group Islands all criminal and civil work is up to date.

NATIVE LAND COURT.

Two short sittings of the Court were held at Rarotonga during the year, and there were also sittings at Aitutaki, Atiu, and Mauke during visits to these islands by the Chief Judge, when the more important and urgent cases were heard. In all thirty cases were disposed of.

Owing to the fact that the Land Court Judge is also the Resident Commissioner and the Chief Judge of the High Court, and has twelve inhabited islands to attend to, and to visit as often as he can, it is not possible to satisfactorily cope with all the Land Court work, although as much time as possible is devoted to it.

During the last five or six years the average number of cases dealt with at Rarotonga has been between fifty and sixty. In addition Courts have been held at Group Islands each year wherever and whenever possible.

To have a regular sitting for any length of time at a Group Island is a difficult matter, as the services of the Deputy Registrar and Interpreter, and the Surveyor (who is also Public Works officer) are necessary, which causes dislocation of services to a considerable extent at headquarters in Rarotonga.

In the year under review the great amount of extra work falling upon the Resident Commissioner's Department on account of hurricane reconstruction made regular Land Court work impossible, but apart from regular sittings many land disputes have been temporarily settled between the parties by conference at the Court office.

In addition considerable time has been spent in clearing up and putting the Land Court records and titles already issued into better order.

POST-OFFICE.

GROUP OFFICES.

During the early part of December opportunity was taken by the Postmaster of a rapid schooner trip around the Lower Group (Aitutaki excluded) to inspect the offices, and to instruct the several Postmasters' in the correct procedure of accounting and the preparation of forms, &c. Particular attention was given to money-order and savings-bank work, and to postal work in general. The visit should benefit the Postmasters concerned, and simplify the duties required of them.

TELEPHONE SERVICES.

Lines.—The telephone lines to the outer villages, and to the Wireless Station are in good order and condition, and practically free from faults. These lines were reconstructed after the hurricane experienced in February, 1935.

MAIL SERVICES.

A satisfactory service is being maintained by the Royal Mail Steamers, mails arriving on regular days and in good order and condition.

POST-OFFICE SAVINGS-BANK.

The summary of transactions in this branch is as follows : Deposits, £15,125 7s. 5d. ; withdrawals, £12,894 15s. 4d. ; excess of deposits over withdrawals, £2,230 12s. 1d.

In view of the exceptional increase in deposits for this financial year, the following comparative table shows the number of transactions and amounts for the years 1928–36 :—

TABLE OF SAVINGS-BANK BUSINESS TRANSACTED IN THE RAROTONGA POSTAL DISTRICT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1936, WITH COMPARATIVE FIGURES FOR THE YEARS 1928–36.

Year.			Amount of Deposits.			Amount of Withdrawals.			Excess of Deposits.		
			£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
1928–29	..	..	13,235	4	8	11,159	8	0	2,075	16	8
1929–30	..	..	12,584	10	7	11,491	14	8	1,092	15	11
1930–31	..	..	14,898	4	8	17,923	13	5	3,025	3	4*
1931–32	..	..	13,932	1	3	14,628	6	1	696	4	10*
1932–33	..	..	10,925	17	5	11,900	10	9	974	13	4*
1933–34	..	..	12,458	3	8	11,238	11	6	1,219	12	2
1934–35	..	..	9,708	10	8	11,277	13	3	1,569	2	7*
1935–36	..	..	15,125	7	5	12,894	15	4	2,230	12	1

* Excess of withdrawals.