

In September the Chief Judge visited the Northern Group and dealt with all criminal cases and civil cases pending at Manihiki, Rakahanga, and Penrhyn.

In Rarotonga and in both the Lower and Northern Groups all criminal and civil work is up to date.

NATIVE LAND COURT.

Sittings.—During the year two sittings were held at Rarotonga, the first in April and May, 1936, the second commencing on 22nd March, 1937, and being expected to occupy some six weeks.

Over three hundred cases, amongst them some keenly contested ones, were disposed of.

Whilst at Penrhyn, Manihiki, and Rakahanga, in September and October, the Chief Judge heard some of the more pressing cases.

Records.—The Registrar, together with a special officer from the Land Court in New Zealand, is busily engaged in checking all records of the Court and rewriting the Titles Registers.

As this is a work of some magnitude it is estimated that these officers will be engaged on it for about twelve months.

POST OFFICE.

MAIL SERVICES.

With the departure of R.M.S. "Makura" on the 1st December, 1936, for New Zealand, the San Francisco contract service was discontinued. Following the termination of this service, the Cook Islands has been served by m.v. "Matua," operating monthly from New Zealand. During certain months of the year the vessel's itinerary includes calls at Nukualofa, Apia, and Suva *en route* to New Zealand, and advantage is taken to prepare mails for the places mentioned. In addition, a mail is made up for the Royal mail steamers Vancouver-bound via Suva. The preparation of the latter despatch provides a quick service to Canada, the United States of America, Japan, China, the United Kingdom, and the continent, as the present schedule provides for "Matua's" arrival at Suva a few days prior to the arrival of the Vancouver contract-service steamers at that port. A mail for Papeete is despatched via Suva, where it is picked up by trading-vessels of the Union Steam Ship Co. operating between Australia and the Pacific Coast via Fiji.

Mails have been exchanged with all Group offices as opportunity offered, and no delay of mail-matter for a lengthy period has occurred. With the closing of Apia as the port of entry for Pukapuka correspondence for that Island will now be despatched by trading schooner from Rarotonga.

POST OFFICE SAVINGS-BANK.

The summary of transactions in this branch is as follows: Deposits, ordinary, £24,015 12s. 10d.; withdrawals, ordinary, £22,128 3s. 5d.; excess of deposits over withdrawals, £1,887 9s. 5d.; savings-bank accounts opened during the year, 215; savings-bank accounts closed during the year, 90; total number of accounts open, 1,541, an increase of 125 over last year; amount at credit of depositors, £28,778 13s. 2d., compared with £26,128 2s. 8d. last year.

The amount at credit of depositors for the financial year just ended is the highest on record for the Cook Islands.

POSTAL NOTES.

Number of notes issued, 1692; value of notes issued, £677 17s. 6d. (1,590 and £585 13s. for the previous year.)

MONEY-ORDERS.

Paid: Number of orders, 343; amount, £7,382 11s. 1d. (277 and £2,598 17s. 6d. for the previous year.) *Issued:* Number of orders, 961; amount, £11,017 15s. 7d.; commission, £237 13s. 9d. (812, £9,330 1s. 3d. and £84 7s. 5d. for the previous year.)

COOK ISLANDS POSTAGE AND REVENUE STAMPS.

Total sales (all sources), £5,572 5s. 2d. This figure shows an increase of £2,404 12s. 4d. over the total sales for the year ended 31st March, 1936 (Jubilee year).

New Zealand stamps of the denominations 2s., 2s. 6d., 3s., 5s., 10s., and £1, which were overprinted "Rarotonga," were withdrawn from sale on the 14th July last and replaced on the 15th idem by similar stamps overprinted "Cook Islands."

It is gratifying to note that the change has been favourably commented upon in several of the more prominent stamp magazines.

The Cook Islands series is now complete from the ½d. value to the £5 value.

TELEPHONE SERVICES.

Lines.—The telephone lines to the outer villages and to the wireless-station are still in first-class condition. Several heavy gales have been experienced during the past year, and it is satisfactory to report that the wire used for the reconstruction of the wireless-station line after the hurricane experienced in February, 1935, has remained free from faults since that time.

WIRELESS.

During the year a continuous and efficient service has been maintained by all radio-stations under the control of this Administration.

Sub-stations in the Lower Group.—No major faults have occurred at any of the four sub-stations, and all schedules have been kept. All sub-stations are operated by Native cadets, who are also employed in other branches of the Administration.

Radio Rarotonga.—Deterioration of the positive plates in the main storage battery in use at Radio Rarotonga has been rapid during the last twelve months. An order was placed for new plates, and these arrived in December.