

“Hours: Savings-bank business may be transacted on week-days between the hours of 10 a.m. and noon, 2 p.m. and 3 p.m., except on Saturdays.

“Further information concerning Savings-bank business may be obtained from the Guide, which can be perused in the Post-office.

“Rarotonga, Cook Islands, 19th June, 1912.

“CHAS. E. MACCORMICK, Judge,

“Acting Resident Commissioner.”

#### WIRELESS-TELEGRAPH STATION.

As far back as the 24th October, 1909, I drew the then Minister's attention to correspondence which passed between myself and M. C. A. F. Ducorron, who proposed to connect the French Territory by wireless with Rarotonga, which it was deemed, and rightly, not advisable. I am very glad to say, however, that the correspondence which has since followed has had the desired effect in the direction of contemplating the establishment of an all-red wireless from New Zealand to Rarotonga, which will eventually result in communications being made between Rarotonga and New Zealand, and possibly between Rarotonga and Fanning Island, the cable-stat on in the Pacific. Land has been taken for this purpose, which has had the approval of His Excellency the Governor, and it only remains now for the New Zealand authorities to install the plant.

In view of the opening of the Panama Canal, it is impossible to state the value to the Empire of this connection.

#### FRUIT: EXPORT, ETC.

There has been a very large output of bananas during the year, totalling no less than 108,520 cases and 6,441 bunches, valued at £24,907. In the previous year there were 106,568 cases and 11,814 bunches shipped, valued at £35,807.

It will at once be seen that there has been a serious fall in values. This is due in no small degree to the fact that the steamer from Fiji and the mail steamer from Rarotonga arrive in Wellington at practically the same time, the result being a greater supply of bananas on the market than the demand requires. I drew attention to this matter in my last annual report, when I suggested that the Union Steamship Company should be approached with a view to some alteration being made, and the foregoing comparison of prices emphasizes the necessity of a rearrangement of the Fiji steamer's timetable if the welfare of New Zealand's Island possessions is to be considered.

There was a large increase in the number of oranges exported, and I am glad to say that the returns have been of a more satisfactory character than in the case of bananas. The total output for the year was 107,612 cases, as against 94,024 cases in the previous year—an increase of 13,588 cases: the respective value being £19,922 and £14,220.

As no oranges are imported from Fiji, this result only further accentuates the ill effect on our banana trade due to the simultaneous arrival of the Rarotonga and Fiji steamers in Wellington.

*Planting.*—It is satisfactory to note that planters, encouraged, no doubt, by the vastly improved methods now in vogue, and by the increased facilities for the shipment of their fruit, have imported a large quantity of citrus-fruit trees from Australia, with the view of replacing the old neglected trees and carrying on the industry in a systematic manner. They will have the hearty support of the Administration in this valuable work, and all possible assistance will be extended to them.

During the year the Administration imported a small quantity of orange-trees of several varieties with the view of experimenting and ascertaining the varieties best suited to the Islands.

I am still in communication with the United States Government with the object, as suggested in my last annual report, of engaging an up-to-date expert in the growing of oranges, with a knowledge of budding and grafting, who would proceed to the plantations and instruct Europeans and Natives alike in pruning and grafting old trees and the planting and care of new ones.

It is proposed this year to spend a certain sum of money on the drainage of the Maraerenga Lagoon, and I contemplate securing the drainage-area for an experimental farm.

A residence is now being erected on the Island of Mauke to accommodate the European Resident Agent, who is now on the island. Under his guidance it is anticipated that the export of oranges from this island will very much increase, as the island is a natural orange-grove, but under the present conditions the facilities for shipment of the oranges provide but a small outlet for the fruit.

*Inspection.*—Good work has been done at the various outlying islands by the European Resident Agents in demonstrating to shippers the correct method of picking and packing for export, and the quality of fruit shipped from these islands has consequently much improved. No complaints have been received for the last two years and six months from the purchasers in New Zealand.

#### COPRA.

There were 1,695 tons of copra, valued at £31,151, exported during the year, being 160 tons more than were exported in the previous year, the increase in value being £3,870.

#### COCONUTS.

During the year a total of 658,840 nuts was sent away, 558,800 going to the United States of America, and the balance (100,040) to New Zealand.

As pointed out in my last annual report, America is a new market for our coconuts, opened up by the San Francisco direct service, and it is a gratifying fact that although the number of nuts exported has increased during the year by some 550,000—equal to 122 tons of copra—the amount of copra manufactured also shows a marked increase.