

The following table illustrates how the trade of the Cook Islands has dropped during the years of depression :—

| Year. | Imports. £ | Exports. £ | Total. £ |
|------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1925 | 130,609 | 151,939 | 282,548 |
| 1930 | 103,468 | 109,438 | 212,906 |
| 1931 | 69,260 | 79,945 | 149,205 |
| 1932 | 63,585 | 73,409 | 136,994 |
| 1933 | 76,716 | 73,983 | 150,699 |
| 1934 | 61,449 | 59,307 | 120,756 |

Copra Trade.—The price of copra has recently shown a rising tendency, but nevertheless the position of the market is very uncertain. The administration has endeavoured to assist the position of the producers by suspending the copra-tax for a further six months following the 31st March, 1935.

The following figures for the years 1928 to 1934 show how the value of copra trade in the Cook Islands has declined :—

| Year. | Tons exported. £ | Total Value. £ | Year. | Tons exported. £ | Total Value. £ |
|---------|---------------------|-------------------|---------|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1928 .. | 1,770 | 33,071 | 1932 .. | 1,294 | 12,340 |
| 1930 .. | 2,143 | 23,478 | 1934 .. | 963 | 4,899 |

Exports.—The following table shows the value of our main exports over the last five years :—

| | 1930. | 1931. | 1932. | 1933. | 1934. |
|----------------------------|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Citrus fruit (Cases) | 128,196 | 82,740 | 85,593 | 92,752 | 78,099 |
| Bananas " | 53,493 | 55,769 | 62,390 | 47,494 | 52,314 |
| Tomatoes " | 30,363 | 34,750 | 54,218 | 17,737 | 34,545 |
| Copra (Tons) | 2,143 | 1,546 | 1,294 | 1,545 | 963 |

Prices paid for oranges, bananas, and tomatoes last season were again very low and brought very little return to growers for the large amount of labour and expense involved in production.

Up to February last there were prospects of favourable crops of oranges in Rarotonga and the Lower Group Islands, and also of bananas in Rarotonga, but over 50 per cent. of oranges have been destroyed by the hurricane, and in Rarotonga 60 per cent. of the banana crop.

As a result of the hurricane, combined with the still-existing trade depression, there will be a small export of fruit this year, which will be followed by a corresponding drop in imports. On the whole, trade prospects for the year throughout the Group are very discouraging.

SHIPPING.

Overseas shipping at the Port of Avarua, Rorotonga, for the year ended 31st December, 1934, comprised a total of thirty-nine vessels, twenty-three being the San Francisco mail-steamers, five the Union Steamship Company's cargo-vessels, five local schooners, five miscellaneous, including s.s. "City of Los Angeles" (2), "Franconia," s.y. "Stella Polaris," a.s. "Tahitienne," and "La Korrigane."

MEDICAL.

Generally speaking, health conditions have been satisfactory throughout the year.

A mild epidemic of influenza occurred in October, 1934, and this affected the Lower Group Islands also. The wireless services were a great convenience in enabling Resident Agents and nurses to get advice from the Medical Officer in Rarotonga. There was a further outbreak of mild influenza in March, 1935.

Child-welfare.—The Committees have worked enthusiastically during the year. There is a definite improvement in the health of the children, and sick ones are being brought for treatment in earlier stages than before.

"*Au Vaine.*"—The "Au Vaine" (women's committees) continue their periodic inspections of their respective villages and plantations. This year the Titikaveka Village won the cup for most points in commercial and domestic planting, and for general hygiene. The all-round standard of the villages is improving from year to year.

School Inspection.—Schools have been regularly inspected, and general health has been satisfactory, although the condition of teeth leaves much to be desired.

Dental Clinic.—A qualified dentist is now employed at the Dental Clinic under an arrangement by which he gives half his time to dental work for school-children. The remainder of his time is devoted to private practice.

Leprosy.—The voyage of the N.Z.G.S. "Matai" through the Lower and Northern Groups to give relief to islands affected by the hurricane gave an opportunity, which has long been sought by the Administration, to remove all lepers to the Leper Asylum at Makogai.

A total of thirty lepers were removed from the Cook Group. Of this number, three were from Aitutaki, and the remaining twenty-seven from the Northern Group—Palmerston one, Penrhyn twenty, Rakahanga three, Manihiki three.

The position at Penrhyn in regard to leprosy has caused the Administration considerable anxiety, as this is the Island into which leprosy was first introduced from Honolulu very many years ago. Since