

In comparison with other islands, Niue does not abound in fish, as these are neither plentiful nor easily caught on account of the absence of any natural harbour, beach, barrier reef, or other shallow water anywhere on the coast-line. Shell-fish are not abundant; land crabs are found and are used as food by the people.

B. AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION AND MARKETING

Copra, Native plaited ware, and bananas are the exports on which the economic life of the island depends. The copra is all Native grown and sun-dried. It is purchased by two trading stores on the island at prices fixed by the Administration on the basis of export realization, less a reasonable profit and handling margin for the traders. Native plaited ware is produced in almost every home on Niue. After a lapse of two years, the banana export trade was revived in December, 1948, with beneficial results to the economy of the island. Bananas are cultivated by the Niueans, and are purchased by the Internal Marketing Department of New Zealand at a fixed price per case.

Experimental plots of citrus trees imported from Rarotonga are being developed by the Administration.

Land Tenure

By the Cook Islands Act, 1915, land is vested in the Crown, subject to Native rights gained and held under ancient custom and usage. Land acquired by the Administration for public purposes represents a negligible part of the whole, and areas in each village used for Church purposes are held on lease to revert to the Native title-holder when no longer employed for those purposes. The ownership and the boundaries of the first type of land, the so-called Native "customary" land, are now generally disputed, and the Native Land Court possesses exclusive jurisdiction to investigate the title to customary land and to determine the relative interests of the owners. The hearing of the claims was commenced before the war, which, however, interrupted proceedings.

As the Niuean depends for his livelihood upon his family lands, alienation is prohibited, so that there are no land-owners apart from the Administration and the island people. No lease of Native land is for a period exceeding sixty years. The passing of land by will is prohibited. On the death of either parent of a family, the land passes to the children; if there are no children, the land reverts to the family, and is thus passed from generation to generation by blood descent.

This policy of land tenure ensures the Niuean sufficient food and shelter, and money with which to purchase clothing and other necessities. There are differences in the wealth of the families, but under the influence of communal ownership, intermarriage, and the customary adoption of children, these differences lose any significance. Niue offers little encouragement to Europeans to settle.

C. STANDARD OF LIVING

No details are available by which to measure a national income; current retail prices of the principal items of consumption are set out in Appendix II and will serve for any comparison of living-costs. It must, however, be borne in mind that these do not necessarily have a bearing on the circumstances of living of the indigenous inhabitants, who, for the most part, live off the food they produce for themselves on their land.

D. COMMUNICATIONS

A radio station is maintained by the Administration for overseas communication, and a single-line telephone system connects the villages on the island.