

When the Tamakautoga Reservoir is completed, ten out of the eleven villages will be provided with reservoirs. The exception—Fatiau—is the smallest village on the island, having a population of only eighty people, and, as they already have a plentiful supply of fresh water, it is not necessary to build one there.

As will be seen from the foregoing table, 15½ miles of roadwork has been completed during the past year. Much of the work was of a very heavy character, which necessitated the use of a considerable quantity of explosives. In one instance—viz., Avatele-Hakupu Road—it was necessary to make a diversion from the old track in order to avoid a very heavy incline. The result has proved very satisfactory, as an excellent road for wheeled traffic has been opened up where previously it was very difficult and dangerous.

Imports and Exports.

As the returns of imports and exports are compiled for calendar years the matter has already been dealt with in a separate report.

Communication with New Zealand.

The sale of the schooner "Countess of Ranfurly" will relieve Niue of a heavy expenditure, for which the island received no adequate return. In recent years her running has been very irregular and uncertain, with the result that traders, in most cases, found it impossible to ship by her. The withdrawal of the schooner from the trade will, however, be felt, as, although her services were useless in other respects, she gave the island an occasional means of communication, the loss of which can be ill spared.

Negotiations are now being entered into with the view of securing a regular service between Niue and Auckland by means of a subsidised vessel. Should the negotiations prove unsuccessful the island will be in a worse position in the matter of communication than it was prior to the date of annexation by New Zealand, with the imminent risk of the trade of Niue passing into foreign hands.

Public School.

The matter of the education of the Native children of Niue has hitherto been in a very unsatisfactory condition. This state of things will now be altered, as the New Zealand Government has made an offer to select and pay the salary of a suitable schoolmaster, provided the Niue Island Administration is willing to undertake the cost of erection of a schoolhouse and schoolmaster's residence, and maintain the same. This offer has been accepted by the Niue Island Council, and a suitable piece of land has been purchased by the Native people of Niue for £108, by public subscription, and presented to the Crown. The work of erecting the school-buildings will be proceeded with as soon as the necessary material arrives from Auckland—probably about June next—and the buildings should be completed by the end of the present year.

Vital Statistics.

The following are the vital statistics for the year ended 31st March, 1908, compared with the figures for the preceding year:—

						1907-8.	1906-7.
Births	...	...	...	...	...	97	90
Marriages	...	...	...	...	...	31	53
Deaths	...	...	...	...	...	104	95
						—	—
Males born	...	...	...	...	...	57	52
Females born	...	...	...	...	...	40	38
						—	—
						97	90
						—	—
Males died	...	...	...	...	...	47	53
Females died	...	...	...	...	...	57	42
						—	—
						104	95

From the foregoing figures it will be seen that there is a slow but steady decline in the population, due to the excess of deaths over births.

Medical Officer.

The Government of New Zealand has recently offered to pay the cost of periodical visits to Niue by one of the Tongan medical officers, if such visits can be arranged, and I am now in communication with the Tongan Government on the subject. While the offer of the New Zealand Government is much appreciated in Niue, periodical visits of short duration cannot be of much practical use in the way of improving the health of the people. I am in hopes that, as soon as the public school and other projected works are completed, the island may, with some slight assistance, be in a position to provide the necessary funds, and secure a resident medical officer. It is rather unique to find in these days a population of some 4,000 persons absolutely without the services of a medical man.

Office-quarters.

The lease of the old premises used for office purposes since the establishment of the Government has been terminated, and the office removed to that portion of the residency building ori-