

NIUE ISLAND.

ANNUAL REPORT OF RESIDENT COMMISSIONER.

No. 35.

SIR,—

Niue Island Administration, Niue, 30th April, 1909.

I have the honour to forward herewith my report for the year ended 31st March, 1909, together with a statement of the receipts and expenditure of the Administration, and the Liquor Account.

I have, &c.,

H. CORNWALL,

The Hon. the Minister, Cook and other Islands, Wellington.

Resident Commissioner.

Enclosure.

NIUE ISLAND.—REPORT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1909.

Revenue and Expenditure.

THE total revenue derived from all sources amounted to £1,809 8s. 11d., as compared with £1,618 8s. 6d. collected during the previous financial year. The items, Customs duties, Court fines and fees, and stamp-sales, all show increases, while the revenue benefited to the extent of £100 on account of the refund of the Niue proportion of the "Countess of Ranfurly" Insurance Fund.

The expenditure for the past year amounted to £2,346 1s. 9d., the details being fully set out in the balance-sheet. The items of expenditure may be classified as follows:—

	£	s.	d.
Permanent charges (salaries, &c.)	379	3	9
Public works, labour, and purchase of material	1,439	2	5
Refund to New Zealand Treasury of balance of amount of Customs duties overcredited to Niue in the year 1905-6	356	15	5
Other charges	171	0	2
	£2,346	1	9

From the foregoing it will be seen that the increased expenditure was principally due to the large amount spent on public works, full details of which are given under the heading "Public Works." In addition there was a sum of £356 15s. 5d. refunded to the New Zealand Treasury on account of an old liability, and, this being the final instalment, the expenditure in future will be considerably relieved.

The credit balance on the 31st March, 1909, was £1,206 8s., as against £1,743 0s. 10d. on the 31st March, 1908, a reduction of £537 12s. 10d.; but, considering that the sum of £1,439 2s. 5d. was spent during the year on public works, and material, &c., for same, it will, I think, be admitted that the financial position of the Administration has been well maintained.

Trade of the Island.

The total value of the exports amounted to £7,107, and of the imports to £6,458.

Notwithstanding the disturbance to trade caused by the effects of the copra *tapu* mentioned elsewhere, the year 1908 was a record one in the matter of productiveness. Although the return of exports shows 7,182 dozen hats, valued at £4,618, and 200 tons of copra, valued at £1,898, as having been exported during the year, there was at the latter end of December 1,500 dozen hats, valued at £910, and 200 tons of copra, valued at £2,133, awaiting shipment; but, as the ship did not get away until the first week in January of this year, they will become exports of the year 1909. If to the figures shown in the return of exports for 1908 there be added the value of the hats and copra aforementioned, it will be seen that the total value of the products for the year was £10,150, a record in the history of Niue.

Turning to the imports for 1908, I find that a comparison with the return for 1907 discloses a decrease of £2,033. There were notable decreases in each of the following items: viz., apparel and slops, biscuits, cotton piece-goods, drapery, preserved fish, hardware, and preserved meats. With regard to apparel, piece-goods, drapery, and hardware, the principal cause of the decreases is due to the fact that the traders did not import to the extent they would have done had there been no disturbance to trade such as was caused through the copra *tapu*. As regards the decreases in biscuits, preserved fish, and preserved meats, they are wholly accounted for by the fact that, owing to the bounteous harvest of local food-products, there has been a smaller demand from the Natives for imported foods. With regard to the future trade prospects of the island, there is every indication that the copra-crop for the ensuing season will be a substantial one. The hurricane period has passed without the semblance of a blow, and, as there has been a fair rainfall, the vegetation of the island never looked better. The Natives are now beginning to realise that their principal source of wealth lies in the cocoanut, and are paying more attention to their trees, with the view of increasing the crop. In addition, many Natives are extending their plantations, with the result that in the course of a few years the output of the island should be materially increased.