

local supply of spring-water. They are joined up with the Fatiau Church roof. All the public reservoirs, with the exception of those at Alofi South and Alofi, now receive their supply of water from the galvanised-iron roofs of the village churches. In the case of the reservoir at Alofi South, that must always rely on its own roof and annexes for its supply, there being no suitable roof in the vicinity to draw from; but the Alofi reservoir will shortly be connected with the church roof—at present it draws its supply from a portion of the Residency roof. It is proposed to instal eight iron tanks at convenient spots on the roadsides in the interior, so that the people working on the plantations, and travellers, may be able to obtain fresh drinking-water. If the scheme proves a success, the system will probably be extended.

A branch road suitable for wheeled traffic has been made from the main Alofi-Avatele Road into the Village of Tamakautoga, the distance being 27 chains.

The freehold of a very suitable and central piece of land in Alofi has been secured as a site for a doctor's residence. As soon as the negotiations in connection with the appointment of a permanent Medical Officer are concluded, steps will be taken towards erecting a suitable residence, &c.

The total sum expended on public works during the year amounted to £645 11s. 1d., full particulars of which will be found in Statement C herewith.

As regards future public works, there is still a considerable mileage of road-construction to be undertaken, while the present concrete jetty at Alofi will have to be lengthened at no distant date. An additional receiving-shed and bond store is also required at Alofi, and a concrete landing-platform is necessary at Avatele, and a similar construction, possibly, at Tuapa. These works will absorb a considerable sum of money, and it will only be possible to undertake them as funds from time to time become available.

Imports and Exports.

The year 1909 proved to be a record year, the total external trade of the island being valued at £22,050, arrived at as follows: Imports, £10,047; exports, £12,003. With regard to the imports, a comparison with previous years' figures discloses that nearly all the items show an increase—notably, apparel and slops, cotton piece-goods, drapery, preserved fish, hardware, matches, preserved meats, silks, soap, and tobacco. Of the 10,047 pounds' worth of goods imported during the year, goods to the value of £6,848, or 68 per cent. of the total, came from New Zealand, while, of the balance, goods to the value of £1,344 were imported from Australia, £846 from German Samoa, and £580 from Tonga. As regards the exports, copra—646 tons, valued at £7,858—easily comes first; while 5,938 dozen hats, valued at £3,247, were exported during the year. The other items do not call for any special mention. Of the exports, produce to the value of £7,086, or 58 per cent. of the total, was despatched to New Zealand, while German Samoa took 4,067 pounds' worth, or 33 per cent. The exports to German Samoa are chiefly represented by copra forwarded to Apia for ultimate despatch to Sydney or San Francisco. Details of the imports and exports will be found in the returns herewith.

Future Prospects.

During the past year the majority of the cocoanut-plantations of the island were thoroughly cleared of undergrowth, and the trees attended to, a work that has not been attempted on such a large scale since the late Patuiki Fataaiki died twelve years ago. During the term of the present Patuiki, the undergrowth in the plantations has been allowed to run wild and smother the trees; consequently very poor crops were harvested. As the result of much agitation on the subject, I have succeeded in getting the people of every village except one (Liku) to make a by-law under the Niue Island Village By-laws Ordinance, 1909, rendering it obligatory on the part of the owners to clean up their cocoanut-plantations at least once every year. This work, if properly carried out, should result in a considerable increase of the copra crop in the near future. In addition to the foregoing, a very large number of young cocoanut-trees has recently been planted, the good prices ruling for copra for some time past having given the Natives the necessary stimulus. During 1909 the plaited-hat industry received a severe check. Owing to the great want of business acumen on the part of the local traders, hats far in excess of the market requirements were purchased and despatched to New Zealand, with the result that the average selling-price fell from 12s. 10d. per dozen in 1908 to 10s. 11d. per dozen in 1909. At present the market is glutted, and, as there is little hope of a recovery for some time, it is probable that comparatively few hats will be exported during the year 1910.

Many years ago quite a large quantity of raw cotton was exported from Niue, but when the slump in the cotton-market took place, and prices fell to bed-rock, the Natives refused to pick it. Since then the cotton on the island has been growing wild, with the result that the staple has deteriorated to such an extent as to be of little market value. A movement is now on foot to revive the cotton industry here, and steps are being taken to procure supplies of seed of one of the varieties best suited to the Niue climate and soil. The Natives are very enthusiastic in the matter, and, provided the market price of raw cotton remains fair, I have no doubt the venture will be a success.

At present copra and hats account for 91 per cent. of the total exports of the island, and it is highly desirable for the welfare of the Natives that other industries should be encouraged. Niue, owing to its isolated position and want of steamship facilities, is unable to participate in the great fruit industry, although the tropical fruits grown here are second to none; consequently, we must look in other directions for our means of support.