

NIUE ISLAND.

REPORT OF RESIDENT COMMISSIONER.

SIR,—

Cook Islands Administration, Niue, 2nd April, 1917.

I have the honour to report as follows on the work of this Administration for the year ended 31st March, 1917 :—

FINANCE.

The revenue derived from all sources amounted to £2,067 12s. 6d., and the expenditure to £1,747 3s. 7d. As compared with the year 1915-16 the revenue shows an increase of £153 16s. 7d. and the expenditure a reduction of £346 15s. 4d. The balance at credit of the Administration, which stood at £727 0s. 4d. on the 1st April, 1916, was £1,047 11s. 3d. on the 31st March, 1917.

As no public works were carried out during the past year the expenditure represents the ordinary recurring expenses of the Administration. Full particulars of the receipts and expenditure will be found in statements A and B and the several supporting statements which are herewith.

TRADE.

The total value of the imports for the year 1916 is £9,512 and the exports £3,379. These figures are the smallest recorded since the Government was instituted.

The island has not yet recovered from the effects of the disastrous hurricane of January, 1915, and the subsequent drought. During the greater part of the year 1915 and the whole of 1916 the ordinary Native foods were extremely scarce; consequently the coconuts which otherwise would have been turned into copra and exported were consumed as food. Altogether the Niueans have passed through a very trying period, but, thanks to an abnormally large rainfall, the island has made an excellent recovery, and at the time of writing there is an exceptionally heavy crop of nuts on the trees, and everything points to a speedy return to prosperous times.

Returns of the imports and exports for the year are attached hereto.

SUBSIDIZED SCHOONER SERVICE.

At the beginning of 1916 a new contract was entered into for the service by schooner between Auckland and Niue direct. The contract, which is for two years, provides for six round voyages from Auckland to Niue and back to Auckland each year. Unfortunately the "Kereru," the ship appointed to carry out the contract, was practically destroyed by fire at Auckland in January, 1916, and owing to the delay in securing and refitting the "Awanui" that schooner was late in leaving Auckland on the first voyage. Consequently the ship was able to complete only five voyages instead of six. During normal times, when trade is flourishing, this would have meant a great loss to the traders and people of Niue, but happening as it did during the very slack period no great inconvenience has been occasioned. However, the missing of the sixth trip has meant that the people of Niue have been cut off from all communication with the outside world for a period of over four months.

PUBLIC WORKS.

During the year no new works were commenced. It is proposed, however, to erect a small prison in Alofi in the course of a month or two at an estimated cost of £500. This work would have been commenced earlier, but owing to the contract schooner not making the sixth voyage at the end of last year the necessary material could not be procured.

GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS.

During the year all necessary repairs to Government buildings have been made, and the buildings painted.

EMIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION.

Sixty-seven persons, including nine Europeans, left Niue for other places, while 182, including fourteen Europeans, arrived in Niue. Apart from those engaged in military services the movements of Natives were very small.

VITAL STATISTICS.

The following is the total number of births, deaths, and marriages registered during the year 1916-17 and the four preceding years :—

Year.	Births.	Deaths.	Marriages.
1912-13	106	99	45
1913-14	94	80	48
1914-15	93	73	70
1915-16	94	100	41
1916-17	82	128	63

It will be noticed that the number of births is smaller than usual. This may be accounted for by the fact that a large number of the young men of the island were away on active service. The number of deaths recorded is much larger than usual, and is undoubtedly due to a very large extent to the excessively wet year that has been experienced.