

TRADE.

Exports for the year ended 31st December, 1918, amounted to £16,537, which is also a record for the island. The high price paid for copra, of which 600 tons were exported during the year, was mainly responsible. A further 700 tons await shipment, and it is to be hoped that the incoming year will bring greatly increased shipping-facilities for dealing with this and other island products. Present appearances point to another satisfactory yield of copra, and the commercial prosperity of the island during 1919-20 depends largely on whether the copra is to be allowed to rot here in the sheds or to find its way to the markets as soon as it becomes available. Imports for 1918 amounted to £17,258, of which £14,782 came from New Zealand. The increase on the figures for the previous year is £4,179. Detailed returns of exports and imports were forwarded to you at 31st December, 1918.

SHIPPING.

Besides five trips made by the contract schooner "Awanui," the "Rira" and the "Manua" made one trip each during the year and loaded copra. The London Missionary Society steamer "John Williams" paid two visits to Niue during the year, and H.M.A.S. "Fantome" called once.

It is with great regret that I have to record the wreck of the "Awanui" at Alofi on the morning of the 11th January, 1919. A strong westerly came up suddenly during the previous night, and with it the heaviest sea of the year. Both the vessel's cables parted, and she drifted on to the reef. No lives were lost, and a considerable quantity of cargo, stores, and fittings was saved. The wreck, to my mind, emphasizes two points: First, the contract schooner—or, indeed, any schooner calling here regularly—should carry an auxiliary engine; second, the necessity exists here for wireless or some other means of communication with the outside world. Despite attempts to attract the attention of passing ships I was unable for a period of almost three months to transmit any information as to the wreck or the fate of the crew. On the 31st March the steamer "Dawn," under instruction from the New Zealand Government, arrived and took off the European members of the crew.

ROADS.

On my arrival in May, 1918, I found that the condition of the roads in the island varied considerably. While there were long stretches in excellent repair, four or five miles of the arterial roads across the island were barely fit for vehicular traffic, while minor repairs were required on another thirty miles of road. The Natives contributed £328 towards roadwork during the year, and it was obvious that the Administration would have to find at least another £200 to cope with the work. I made an arrangement through the Island Council under which the villages concerned were to do the work under a Government foreman at a rate of £15 a mile, with an additional £5 a mile where special difficulties existed. In addition there were expenses of supervision, dynamite, tools, and compensation for coconuts destroyed in widening the roads. So far about nine miles of road have been re-formed under this system, and it appears to be working well. The roads have been widened to 16 ft., and all overhanging bush has been cut well back. The year's programme has not been completed, the expenditure so far being only £303, and I have therefore put the estimate for the coming year at £700.

The roads re-formed are—Liku-Alofi Road, Liku to Mana corner, $6\frac{1}{2}$ miles; Fatiau to the Avatele-Hakupu Road, $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles; Hakupu-Alofi Road (still in progress), $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles.

When the whole of the roads have been brought to a certain standard of repair I consider that it will be advisable to keep a small permanent gang of roadmen regularly at work on them. Both from the medical and the commercial point of view good roads are of the first importance in Niue, and if revenue permits I hope to be within an approachable distance of completion of this work by the end of the coming year.

OTHER PUBLIC WORKS.

The steps and track leading up from the jetty have been concreted during the year. These were in a very dilapidated condition, and were dangerous in places. Two new leading-beacons have been erected, the old ones having been destroyed by a gale some time before my arrival. A mast from the "Awanui" has been utilized to provide a fine flagstaff at Alofi, while the old one has been set up at Tufukia School. The residence of the police officer, which was a very old Native building and had long outlived its usefulness, has been pulled down, and a new house is practically completed. Two long stone walls coated with punga have been built by prison labour at dangerous spots on the main road in Alofi Village. In addition all necessary repairs to Government buildings, reservoirs, &c., have been effected.

I propose to enlarge the jetty considerably during the coming year so as to permit of the stacking of copra at the waterside in readiness for shipping. At present only one boat at a time can load or unload at the jetty, and this requires alteration. When the price of corrugated iron and cement is more normal I propose to duplicate the reservoirs in the larger villages. The Native water-supply, particularly in those villages which are not actually on the coast, is a long way from adequate.

POPULATION.

During the year 1918 eighty-one persons, including fifteen Europeans, arrived in Niue, while 133 persons, including eight Europeans, left. It will be noticed that the Native population suffered to the extent of fifty-nine through migration.