

Arbor Day, on which day he asked every Native to plant at least one coconut-tree, with the result that last year fifteen thousand trees were planted.

As in the Cook Islands, so in Niue, regular shipping facilities are essential if the export trade is to be stimulated. For a considerable time the trade of the island will not be sufficient to attract a regular steamship service. Arrangements, however, should be made for an auxiliary schooner contract running a regular seven-weekly service, and capable of carrying 150 tons at least, weight or measurement. We are aware of the difficulties which exist in inaugurating such a service, but if no suitable arrangement can be made with private owners we seriously suggest that the New Zealand Government should purchase and run a suitable vessel. Shipping was the first thing mentioned by every witness, and is a matter of primary importance if Niue is to be properly developed.

We suggest for your serious consideration the question of making Niue self-supporting. At the present moment it costs the New Zealand Government at least £3,000 a year, and no return is obtained except the knowledge that an attempt is being made to do something for a race whose advantages do not equal ours. We think, however, that it would be greatly to the interest of the Natives themselves if they could be stimulated to self-development, and taught to work out their own destiny under your Government's guidance. We think this could be done in a way which would not fall heavily on the individual. We are of opinion that the purchase of copra in Niue should be a Government monopoly on a scheme somewhat after the system in vogue at Pago Pago—that is, the Government call for prices annually for the output of copra from the island. The successful tenderer, as in the American system, would have to pay on the signing of the contract a deposit of 20 per cent. of the estimated total quantity to be produced, and 15-per-cent. advances as the time goes on. In other words, the successful tenderer would be required to put up from time to time all the money required to pay the Natives cash for the material as it was delivered to the Government sheds. Administration charges, together with, say, £4 or £5 per ton, should be deducted from the price paid to the Natives, and the amount so collected used for the development of the island. We are sure this system would work out particularly well, as the Natives are practically the only growers.

Against this direct tax the ordinary copra export tax of £1 per ton might be dropped. Moreover, we do not think the Natives would get less for their copra than they are getting at present, the traders would get ready money for their stores, the New Zealand taxpayer would be freed from his present contribution, and the Niueans would pay for their own improvements.

If the system were successful—and we think it would be if it were carefully carried out—its extension to other islands might be worth consideration.

While a wireless installation is not advocated by the traders, we think an installation would be of benefit to the inhabitants as a whole. As an earnest of their desire to have communication with the outside world the Natives have already subscribed the sum of £70 towards the project. This is quite a voluntary effort on their part, and an effort which should be frankly encouraged, for a wireless outfit would doubtless be of some benefit to the trade of the island, and would keep the people there in touch with the outside world.

The present regulations in force for keeping down noxious weeds and for supervising the general cleanliness of Native plantations should, for the benefit of the owners, be rigorously enforced. This course, we are sure, the leading Natives would endorse and applaud.

If, as suggested in our report on the Cook Islands, a tropical section of the Agricultural Department is established in New Zealand, valuable information, together with results of experiments in other Pacific islands, may with advantage be passed on to the Administration.

We think, from the trading point of view, the importation of alcoholic liquors, except for sacramental, medical, and manufacturing purposes, should be prohibited.

Traders.

Robert Head, Frank Head, John Wilson English, A. O. Head, Harry C. Collins, Allen O. Head, Nemia and Kumatau, Native Co-operative Company.