

to secure the minimum amount of help necessary to the running of their estates were compelled to bid against each other, thus gradually forcing the cost of indentured labour to the present almost prohibitive prices. Again, in order to secure transports to convey the time-expired men back to China special inducements had to be offered, and, instead of £2 10s. previously paid, the planters were compelled to pay £22 10s. per head, and that within a certain time, or as warned by a notice issued from the Chinese Commissioner's office, be mulcted of 10 per cent.

*Native Plantations.*—The nuts are mainly growing in the immediate vicinity of the coast, and very few are planted inland. They are planted without care and at no regular intervals—probably well over 150 trees to the acre. Many trees, owing to overcrowding, do not produce. The coconut is the Natives' main article of trade; without it he would indeed be a very poor man.

The forced repatriation of indentured labour must undoubtedly have some effect upon these plantations. It is not necessary to be a planter of experience to know that the supply of local labour is not sufficient to keep the European estates going, even if the companies could afford to pay the high wages which would be demanded by these people if they had no competition.

Now, if the few remaining labourers are repatriated and we are not allowed to introduce others, what will the planters' position be and what will that of the Native be? Granted that the local labour-supply is insufficient, nevertheless planters will have to draw upon it. The old trouble of demand and supply will affect wages to such an extent that the planters must inevitably be forced, through the shortage and impossible cost of labour, to abandon their holdings. Before this is brought about, however, the Native, attracted by the high wages offering, will have been induced to neglect his own properties, so that a stage certainly will be reached when both European and Native holdings will be in a very bad condition. To remedy this the Native will be unable to hire out his services, as he will be fully occupied in attending to his own lands, and with no available labour to care for the European properties they must revert to jungle. Every one knows what that means—ideal breeding-nurseries for the dreaded rhinoceros-beetle, which with no one to disturb it will breed in thousands, and after eating out the palms in the back-plantation districts will come down in droves to attack the Native coastal plantations.

*Position of Beetle before Epidemic.*—There is not the slightest doubt that prior to the epidemic the beetle was fairly held; many trees that had suffered severely through the attacks of the beetle had recovered, and altogether the outlook for coconut-planters was most encouraging. Every credit should be given to the Department of Agriculture and Administration generally for having brought about through their untiring efforts this most desirable situation. They spent thousands of pounds combating this pest. Competitions with generous prizes were started among the Natives for the greatest number of beetles, larvæ, and eggs destroyed. Inspectors were appointed and posted in different districts to check the returns. The whole Native male population of Samoa, together with all indentured labour, had to turn out each Monday forenoon to search for beetles. A cinematograph was imported and showed round the islands on other than searching-days, at which a charge of so-many beetles was made for admission. The Natives were forced to clean some 17,000 acres of anything likely to form a breeding-place for beetle. This, then, was the position before the influenza struck Samoa.

*Beetle during Epidemic.*—It will be readily admitted by the people who are in a position to judge that up till the time the epidemic struck Samoa we were more than holding the beetle in check. Now, what happened? During the awful weeks of influenza—for practically three months—no searching was carried out either by Samoans or Chinese, with the result that the beetle undisturbed has flourished, and signs may be noticed by intelligent observers which warn us that once more we will have to buckle down to a very strenuous fight if we are to save our trees and regain the position we held before the epidemic.

Let us now review our position and find out what force we have at our disposal for the fight. In proportion to her population Samoa probably suffered as heavily as any other country in the world. As far as we can ascertain the death-roll is as follows: Upolu—Men, 2,079; women, 1,720; children 1,027 (21 per cent.). Savaii—Men, 1,186; women, 984; children, 546 (20 per cent.). Totals—Men, 3,265; women, 2,704; children, 1,574; (19 per cent.). 7,543 deaths—19 per cent. of the total population. The majority of people who died were middle-aged, or, in other words, the working population. Old people and children practically escaped.

Now, unfortunately for the future of Samoa, at least 75 per cent. of the most influential *matais*, or head men, died.

With her population depleted to such an extent, with at least two-thirds of her working population gone, with the majority of her trained officials dead, three months' back work to catch up, with young, newly appointed officials who do not thoroughly realize the danger threatening the very life of Samoa, is Samoa in a position to carry on the war successfully against the beetle?

The population is made up as follows: Men, 7,723; women, 9,623; children, 13,290. Where are our workers and fighters to come from? Is it not obvious that, with their own area to look after, it is out of all question that they should furnish labour for the European plantations? Then what is to be the result if indentured labour is to be barred. Are the thousands of acres now under European cultivation to be allowed to go back to jungle as nurseries for the beetles and every other kind of disease?

The whole copra life of Samoa is seriously threatened. Is the outside capital already invested in Samoa to be sacrificed? Is no inducement to be held out in order to encourage new capital into the country and thus increase our revenue? In other words, are we, instead of pursuing a vigorous go-ahead policy for the future benefit of the country and people, to stagnate and drift back?

Unless indentured labour or labour of some kind is brought into the country we are faced with bankruptcy. It is only by a great increase in the working population of Samoa that she has any chance of coping with the rhinoceros-beetle.

I have endeavoured to compile this report to show how vitally necessary to the future welfare of Samoa indentured labour is.

The question of the type of labour possible to be secured is a difficult one. We have not yet heard for certain whether Captain Carter, who was despatched to China, has been successful in his mission. There are rumours that he has not. In our opinion he should not have had any difficulty if he had gone to the right place in securing all the Chinese coolies required at an outside wage of £1 10s. per month. Failing this, it would appear that our only other hope of securing sufficient labour is from the Dutch East Indies, where there are teeming millions of population ready and willing to be employed, providing the Dutch Government's permission is secured to their introduction as indentured coolies. Previous to the war, negotiations were conducted between the German and Dutch Governments for the importation of Javanese labour, and the planters pray you to despatch a mission of some one entirely cognisant of local affairs to continue the negotiations. We consider it possible that some arrangement might be come to whereby some of the many surplus acres of Samoa might be given to Javanese settlers in return for their work, or that they might be induced to work here for a share of the crops of the estate. The following report has been received from a German planter who lived there some years:—

"I will give you some particulars about my experience in Sumatra during six years' work on plantations with Javanese and Chinese labour. I left the Dutch East Indies in 1906, and there may have been some changes since then. I saw Javanese labour, men and women, on rubber, tobacco, and coffee plantations; we had in Sumatra only indentured labour. As indentured labour you can get men and women married or single as required. They will find each other and live together. The Javanese works at least as well as the Chinese nowadays, and will be cheaper. In any case, Javanese labourers are far easier to satisfy than Chinese. Rice, dry fish, and coconut-oil will be their staple food, and if sometimes fresh meat is added they will be very satisfied. In Sumatra these people supplied their own food and got only wages which were during my stay very low—men 6 guilder per month, and women 3½ guilder. (A guilder represents about 1s. 8d. in English currency.) If they reindentured after three years they got up to 9 or 10 guilder per man and 5 to 7 guilder for women. The labour on coffee-plantations is similar to that with cocoa: cleaning