

## NIUE ISLAND.

### REPORT OF RESIDENT COMMISSIONER.

SIR,—

Niue, 1st April, 1920.

I have the honour to enclose herewith my annual report, together with the reports of the Medical Officer and the acting head teacher at Tufukia School, and the usual returns.

I have, &c.,

GUY N. MORRIS,

Resident Commissioner.

The Hon. the Minister in Charge, Cook Islands Department, Wellington.

SIR,—

Alofi, Niue, 1st April, 1920.

I have the honour to submit for your consideration my report on the work of the Niue Island Administration for the year ended 31st March, 1920.

#### FINANCE.

The Administration has had a year of unprecedented success from the financial point of view. The revenue amounted to £6,563 ls. 1½d., being £2,959 in excess of any previous figures. The main items of revenue were—Customs duties, £1,805; stamp-sales, £1,808; and copra-export duty, £1,110. The expenditure amounted to £3,661 16s. 3d., the balance in hand being £4,241 8s. 9d., an increase of £2,901 4s. 10½d. for the year. In view of the expenses of erection and equipment of a hospital during the coming year this balance is very satisfactory. I estimate the expenditure for 1920–21 at £6,175, while the revenue should reach £5,000.

#### TRADE.

The year 1919 was also an exceptionally successful one for the island from the commercial standpoint. Niue was extremely fortunate in shipping the whole of the copra which had accumulated during the years of the war, and this accumulation has swelled the export figures to an abnormal extent. It is therefore not to be expected that the same result will be attained again for some years to come, though there is little doubt that, with increased planting and careful attention to the trees, Niue could double her output of copra during the next decade. The imports reached £21,783, in which total, of course, increased prices have played a big part. Exports amounted to £35,977, giving a total trade value of £57,760 for the year, the previous best being £34,828. 1,110 tons of copra were exported during the year, and the traders were left with empty sheds. During the latter part of 1919 there was keen competition for copra, and the price paid to the Natives at one time reached £28 per ton. The Natives have therefore enjoyed a period of unprecedented prosperity. In any case the Natives have the option of taking a share in the space in the contract schooner, but this privilege is but little availed of, the Niueans evidently being content with the prices paid on the island for their produce. There was, however, one untoward result of the high prices, a number of Natives being tempted to use immature nuts in making copra. The police promptly caught a number of offenders, and severe penalties were inflicted by the Court, so that the practice soon ceased. Every care is taken here to see that only matured nuts are used, and also that the copra is properly dried before sale or shipment. It has been noticed that merchants in Auckland have reported unfavourably on the copra obtained from some of the islands, but Niue is certainly not included amongst these. On the contrary, masters of various vessels have spoken in most complimentary terms of the quality of Niue copra, and I have been told on more than one occasion that it will bear comparison with any in the Pacific. Copra is and always will be the only important product of this island, and the Administration is making every possible effort not only to keep up the quality but to increase the output.

It will be observed from the export return that New Zealand received only 587 tons of our copra out of 1,110 exported, and I have reason to believe that even as regards the 587 tons a large proportion will simply be re-exported from New Zealand. The New Zealand Customs figures show that very little of the raw product is used in the country, and there would seem to be a danger that New Zealand's trade in this article will be merely entrepot. Now that New Zealand has Samoa included amongst her island possessions there is annually a large crop of copra at her disposal, and the opinion is freely expressed here and in other islands that an effort should be made in New Zealand to foster and encourage those industries which use copra, and that if necessary the State itself should take up the matter. Such a step would do much to establish a community of interest which is at present not very apparent between New Zealand and the islands.

#### SHIPPING.

Besides three trips made by the contract schooner "Rira," the following vessels called at Niue during the year: s.s. "Tutanekai," s.s. "Mokoia," "Henriette," "Ysabel" (twice), s.s. "John Williams," "Jubilee," "Manua," and "Makoa." The contract vessel did not arrive on her first trip until the 8th July, the delay being due to the wreck of the "Awanui," knowledge of which did not reach New Zealand until April. The "Rira" arrived again on the 28th August, and a third time on the 10th November, bad weather accounting for delays on these trips. It was hoped that a fourth voyage would nevertheless be made, but it did not eventuate, and the Adminis-