

The average export of copra from the Group is about 10,000 tons in normal seasons, but should the islands be visited by a severe hurricane the output would be enormously reduced. At present they have no fruit trade to take the place of copra; in other words, they have no second string to their bow, and owing to the want of shipping facilities they are staking their all on copra.

Experiments are now being tried with coffee-growing.

Several tractor ploughs have been imported, and are proving satisfactory.

There are no rhinoceros-beetles in the Group, and strict measures are adopted to keep them out. All trade relations with Samoa have been broken off owing to the danger of their introduction.

There is a cold-storage plant in Nukualofa, with storage capacity of 8 to 10 tons; also a wireless station, of small power, which can only communicate effectively with Fiji on the one side and Samoa on the other. All communications to New Zealand at present go through Suva, and thence by Pacific cable, at the cost of 1s. 8d. per word. An alternative route is now being considered via Apia and Awanui, at a cost of 1s. 6d. per word. We understand, however, that with certain alterations, at small expense, messages might be received direct from Nukualofa at Awanui, and the cost per word would be thereby reduced to 1s. Anything which tends to encourage intercourse between the two peoples must have a beneficial effect on trade relationships, and we therefore recommend that such alterations at Awanui be carried out as early as possible.

Imports.

For your information we have enclosed a complete list of the imports of goods, showing country of shipment. From this will be seen at a glance the trend and volume of trade in each article. We also append a list of the total imports extending over a number of years.

While the wants of the Natives are small individually, it will be seen that the volume of trade is not inconsiderable, and is well worth cultivating. The men wear cotton shirts and lavalavas, while the women wear loose dresses of quiet-coloured cotton material over a chemise. Ornaments in the shape of tortoise-shell combs and earrings are popular. There is not a great demand for boots, shoes, stockings, or socks, but it is growing.

There is a large and growing demand for flour, sugar, biscuits, tinned and salted meats, fish (especially salmon and herrings). A certain trade is also done in the importation from Fiji of live-stock for killing purposes, and there is an increasing sale for frozen meat from New Zealand. New Zealand practically holds the whole of the tinned-meat trade, although quantities have been imported from other centres when there has been a shortage in New Zealand.

New Zealand flour is not popular, and Australia holds practically a monopoly in this commodity. Although New Zealand shares a little in the importation of biscuits, and has lately benefited owing to the shipping strikes in Australia, still the price charged for biscuits and tins is higher than that charged by Australian houses. No complaints were received regarding quality.

Confectionery comes mostly from Australia; but as the price of sugar has been considerably lower for the last few years in New Zealand, there seems no reason why the whole of the demand in this direction should not have come from New Zealand makers.

There is a comparatively large demand for cotton goods, cashmeres, ginghams, and insertion laces. Heavy cheap umbrellas were previously imported from Germany; so were towels and singlets. Japan now holds the greater proportion of this trade.

The whole trade of this Group, which closely resembles that of the Cook Islands and Samoa, is fully dealt with in those sections of this report.

In hardware the principal articles in demand are enamel plates, pans, chambers, mugs, iron boilers and pots, hurricane and hanging lamps, butchers' knives, spades, galvanized-iron sheets (plain and corrugated), pipes, fish-hooks, &c.

There is no reason why the trade in the following articles, which are made in New Zealand, should not be increased: Plain and fancy soap, stationery, boots,