

PUKAPUKA.

The following is a report from the newly appointed Resident Agent at Pukapuka :—

SHIPPING.

During the two years ended 31st March, 1929, thirteen vessels visited Pukapuka—the schooner “Tiare Taporo,” from Papeete (twice); the schooner “Tamarina,” from Samoa (five times); N.Z.G.S. “Hinemoa” (once); H.M.S. “Laburnum” and “Dunedin” (once each); and the schooner “Choiseul,” from Samoa (three times).

The following is a return of exports and imports for the two years ended 31st March, 1929 :—

Exports.—16/9/27—71 tons copra; 5/1/28—21 tons; 23/7/28—42 tons; 7/2/29—26 tons; 5/3/29—20 tons: Total, 180 tons copra.

Imports.—25/1/28—£825; 15/7/28—£653; 12/11/28—£392: Total, £1,870.

In addition to the above exports, 50 tons of copra was awaiting shipment at the end of the year.

FUTURE PROSPECTS.

In an endeavour to procure more copra for export, the number of coconuts for *umukais* (feasts) has been limited by order of the Resident Agent and Island Council. The old custom of all the people removing, together with their pigs and fowls, to the Motus for the entire copra season has been prohibited, and permission granted for a limited stay only. This has resulted in a larger output of copra, and is undoubtedly for the benefit of the Native people. These Motus, which were planted to the order of a previous Resident Agent, are now bearing. It is estimated that Pukapuka will be capable of producing 120 tons of copra next year. When all the young trees come into bearing, this quantity will be greatly increased.

PLANTING.

During last year a special inspection was made of Motu Ko and Motu Kotawa. On the former was a large area on the southern side still unplanted and covered with pandanas. During April, 1928, this area was cleared and planted by the men of Ngake with 1,800 nuts, and this year a further 4,000 nuts have been planted, which will approximately cover the whole area. Some of the trees on this island are planted too closely, and are being thinned out to permit of full bearing of the remainder. Motu Kotawa is almost entirely planted. Five hundred trees were planted here during the year in the Native fashion, but there is need here also of thinning-out.

PUBLIC WORKS.

Roads on the island have been maintained by the people. In December, 1928, the road across the taro swamp leading to the Government lands was improved by the people, who were specially called out for this purpose. It was widened and covered with white sand, and has since been maintained by the prisoners in working out their fines.

HEALTH.

The health of the people in general has been very satisfactory throughout the past year. An influenza epidemic, unhappily introduced from Samoa, caused the loss of five lives. Yaws, which are a common disease on the island, have been reduced by means of injection with bicreol, applied by the wife of the Resident Agent under instructions from the Chief Medical Officer, who visited the island in 1928. Fifty-eight persons were injected during December and January. Ringworm (here called “lava”) is also common, and injection for same has been very beneficial.

POST OFFICE.

The following shows the amount of correspondence posted and delivered during the year: Posted—497 letters, 11 registered, 18 packets, 31 parcels; Delivered—470 letters, 13 registered, 30 packets, 56 newspapers, 22 parcels.

GENERAL.

The island has been free from hurricanes during the year. All houses and premises have been kept clean. The Women's Committee, headed by the wife of the Resident Agent, is doing good work in this connection. During the months of January and March a general cleaning-up was made. A special *tutaka* was made of the cookhouses, which were found to be surprisingly clean and tidy, with white gravel covering the floors and immediate surroundings, and shelves arranged for pans, &c. Further special *tutakas* of all premises are to be made during the year. To encourage this good work, prizes for the cleanest premises have been donated by the Resident Agent and his wife. Good work has also been done by the people in building pandanas-root walls and concreting the floors of the Courthouse. The building has also been reroofed with new iron, and painted and repainted to prevent rust. A veranda has also been added, and a kitchen built. The Resident Commissioner (Judge Ayson) presented the people with six bags of rice as a mark of the Government's appreciation of their good work. The people have also made a lime-kiln by means of which a concrete veranda has been built on to the Residency.

EDUCATION.

The scheme of work being carried out was laid down by the Superintendent of Schools during his visit in 1927. One hundred and fifty-six children are on the roll. Chart reading, action reading, and blackboard reading, and reading from class-books 2-5 is progressing. The children are also picking up a little English. Maori is taught by Pastor Kare, of the London Missionary School, to ensure all Natives being able to read and write their own language. Arithmetic, sufficient to enable them to work out the value of their copra, is also taught. Physical drill is practised, the senior boys conducting classes, and drilling in mass being taken by the Resident Agent.