

NATIVE AFFAIRS.

The Niucans are among the best workers in the Pacific. This is mainly due to the difficulties they experience in growing their food-supplies, there being very little soil available.

The Island is only 64,000 acres in extent. Three-quarters of this area is covered with bush growing among rocks, so that the population of 4,276 people have to obtain all their requirements from about 16,000 acres of land, half of which is practically worked out. There are no secondary industries to help them and little paid employment offering.

The London Missionary Society is the only Church organization in Niue, and practically all the Natives are members. The Society does excellent work with its one European Missionary.

MEDICAL AND PUBLIC HEALTH.

The £2,468 spent on the medical services has assisted to maintain the health of the people, who receive free medical treatment in their villages and at the hospital.

The nursing staff at the hospital consists of one European Matron and five Niue nurses.

The following is a summary of the work performed at the hospital, but, in addition, each village is visited weekly by the Medical Officer, and at such other times as he is summoned:—

(1) Infectious Diseases—			(3) Hospital and Dispensary— <i>continued</i> .		
(a) Tuberculosis	..	15	Average number of days in hospital		
(b) Gonorrhœa	..	27	per patient	..	20·26
(c) Yaws	..	528	Daily average bed state	..	10·43
(d) Pneumonia and broncho-			District out-patients	..	9,345
pneumonia	..	21	Dispensary out-patients	..	3,367
(e) Conjunctivitis	..	225	Special visits	..	1,011
(f) Ringworm	..	112	Special district visits	..	816
(g) Varicella	..	2	In-patient dressings	..	3,956
(2) Endemic Diseases—			Out-patient dressings	..	5,364
(a) Filariasis	..	82	Operations—		
(b) Myositis tropica	..	8	Major	..	0
(3) Hospital and Dispensary—			Minor	..	86
In hospital, 1st January, 1938	..	12	Dental extractions	..	127
Admitted during year	..	161	Injections: N.A.B. and Bisoxyl	..	1,417
Discharged during year	..	167	Confinements	..	15
Died in hospital during year	..	1	Anæsthetics—		
Remaining in hospital, 31st			General	..	20
December, 1938	..	5	Local	..	54

General.—A somewhat severe epidemic of bronchial catarrh, complicated in some cases by pneumonia and broncho-pneumonia, visited the Island at the end of July, and lasted for five weeks. It was characterized by a sudden onset, high fever, and the duration of the lung complications, which in some instances took six to eight weeks to clear up. There were, however, only four deaths, all being of patients under two years of age. It is probable that the disorder was brought here from Western Samoa, where it was epidemic at the time.

The Government and Mission schools were closed during the greater part of the epidemic. Apart from this outbreak, the health of the people was good.

Inspection of Schools.—Owing to frequent reports of the prevalence of yaws amongst the school-children it was decided to inspect them all.

The work was commenced at the end of September and completed in October. In all, 762 children were examined, and of these, 550 had yaws in some form, and practically all had enlarged epitrochlear glands. It was decided to give each of the 550 infected children three injections of N.A.B. at weekly intervals. At the end of the year, owing to the school holidays, the pupils of Tufukia School only had been injected, but it was intended that the work should be resumed towards the end of February. The results should prove interesting.

This Department has functioned very satisfactorily, the work being greatly appreciated by all concerned. There has been a very marked improvement in the health of the Natives.

EDUCATION.

This service is carried out by the Administration and the London Missionary Society, there being at present two schools controlled by the former and ten by the Mission.

The Administration has commenced the erection of a new school at Mutalau, and it is hoped to have this functioning before long.

The £2,159 spent by the Administration includes a subsidy of £500 paid to the London Missionary Society to assist them in their school-work.

The average roll strength of the two Administration schools was 388, and the average attendance 88 per cent., the figures for the Mission schools being 522 and 89·5 per cent.

The educational system is being carried out on modern methods as far as they can be applied to local conditions, and is producing good results, both Administration and Mission working in perfect harmony.

PUBLIC WORKS AND TRANSPORT.

Buildings.—No new buildings were erected during the year, as it was considered advisable to concentrate on carrying out necessary repairs and improvements to the existing buildings.

Roads.—There has been a great improvement in the roads. Expenditure for the year was heavy, but after the roads have been put in order maintenance will not be very great.

The improved surfaces have reduced considerably the work of keeping transport in good order.