

PUBLIC WORKS.

During the year a sum of £845 10s. 5d. was expended on new works, details of which are given hereunder.

Medical Officer's Residence.—This building, which was not quite finished at the end of last year, has been completed. The total cost of the work was £609 12s., of which £575 4s. 10d. was charged in the account for the year 1910–11, the balance, £34 7s. 2d., falling into this year's account. A description of the house was given in my last report.

Dispensary and Consulting-rooms.—Upon the arrival of the Medical Officer in May last steps were at once taken to erect a building in the grounds attached to the Medical Officer's residence to serve as a dispensary, consulting-room, &c. After conferring with Dr. Schumacher, a building 37 ft. long by 12 ft. wide, divided into three rooms, was decided upon, and has been erected. The structure consists of a timber frame embedded in plaster made from coral lime. The interior has been fitted up in accordance with the doctor's requirements, which included the installation of porcelain sinks and a water-service in each of the three rooms. The water is obtained from an elevated tank which derives its supply from the roof of the building, while a satisfactory system of drainage has been put down. Dr. Schumacher reports that the building has proved very suitable for the work, and that it will probably answer all requirements for some years to come. The total cost of the work was £144 10s. Of that amount £14 0s. 3d. was charged to the year 1910–11, while the balance, £130 9s. 9d., falls into this year's account.

Mana to Lakepa Road.—In last year's report I intimated that it was intended to undertake this important work during this year. In September last the track was carefully measured, and it was found that the total length was 5 miles 73 chains. On the 25th September work was commenced, and kept going until the 15th March, when the task was completed. The formation-work was of an extremely heavy character, and it was found necessary to use a large quantity of explosives; but the Natives were enthusiastic about the road and worked at it almost every day from daylight to dark until it was finished. The road has been made of a uniform width of 18 ft. throughout, and an excellent job has been made of it. This road brings the village of Lakepa some three and a half miles nearer to Alofi, and provides an alternative route to the northern part of the island, besides tapping one of the most fertile districts in Niue. I should explain that Mana, the starting-point of the road, is situated three miles and a quarter from Alofi, on the Alofi-Liku Road. The total cost of the work amounted to £407 2s., or about £69 per mile.

Roadside Tanks.—A start was made this year to erect a number of small iron tanks along the roads in the interior where there is no water of any kind. The principle adopted is the erection of a small shed roofed with corrugated iron to serve as a catchment for the tank, which is placed underneath. The shed merely consists of a roof supported on four posts. Seven of these erections have been placed at suitable spots, and so far have been greatly appreciated. It is hoped by these means to prevent, to some extent, the great waste that goes on in Niue through the Natives drinking the young coconuts. It is proposed to erect about twenty-five of these tanks as soon as suitable tanks and the necessary material can be obtained. The cost of eight tanks, together with material therefor, seven of which have been erected, amounted to £41 5s. 2d. Of that amount £24 14s. will be found charged in this year's account, while £16 11s. 2d. was charged in a previous year.

New Bond Store and Receiving-shed.—With the increasing business of the island it was found that much larger storage accommodation was required to satisfactorily deal with inward cargoes. A new building has been erected on the Landing Reserve at Alofi in close proximity to the old store. The dimensions of the new building are 36 ft. by 27 ft., divided into two stores each measuring 18 ft. by 27 ft. The site selected for the new shed required a considerable amount of filling, and the opportunity was taken to cut down and widen the road leading down to the jetty and to use the spoil therefrom to fill up the site. The new store will prove very convenient, and with the alterations to the Jetty Road it is now practicable for the traders to cart their goods direct from the store instead of having them carried by Natives as heretofore. The cost of widening the Jetty Road was £33 7s. 2d., and of the new bond and receiving-shed £142 6s. 1d.

Technical Workshop, Tu'afu School.—The erection of this building, which was delayed owing to the change of masters at the school, was almost completed at the end of the year. All that remains to be done is to put down a timber floor inside, and concrete the verandah. This will be done as soon as the necessary material comes to hand. The dimensions of the building are 36 ft. long by 14 ft. wide, with a verandah 7 ft. wide round three sides of the building. The expenditure up to the end of the year has been £104 14s. 1d. Of that amount the erection of the building has absorbed £60 18s., while £43 16s. 1d. has been spent on tools (including lathe), and equipment. £41 1s. 2d. will be found charged to the account for 1911–12, while the balance was charged in previous years. Further expenditure will be necessary to complete the floor and verandah.

Hakupu-Liku Road, Avatele-Fatiau Road, and Tuapa-Hikutavake Road.—The expenditure shown in the accounts against these roads is merely the cost of explosives imported for the works, which will be undertaken during the year 1912–13.

EXPERIMENTAL COTTON-CULTIVATION.

I mentioned in my last report that experiments were being made in the cultivation of sea-island cotton, and published a number of letters that had passed between the British Cotton-growing Association and myself on the subject. The plants grew remarkably well and threw a good crop. A fair sample of the lint was baled and despatched to the association in November last for analysis and report. I have just received advice from the secretary of the British Cotton-growing Association that their broker reports that the Niue cotton was "clean, bright, extra fine, long staple, well worth growing;