

The present sample is rather softer and less resilient than ordinary Java kapok, probably owing to the amount of immature fibre present, and even if exported in clean condition and free from seed and dissepiment it would not be likely to realize a price equal to that of commercial Java kapok, which is at present quoted at 11d. to 1s. 5d. per pound in the United Kingdom, according to quality (January, 1920). The pre-war price of Java kapok was generally in the neighbourhood of 7d. to 9d. per pound.

From these circumstances, and the fact that the floss realizes 1s. per pound at Apia, it does not seem likely that it could be remuneratively exported from Samoa under present conditions.

I am, &c.,

ERNEST GOULDING,

For the Director

There is practically no export trade in kapok being done. The Natives consider the price—1s. per pound—which is paid locally for it is not sufficiently remunerative for the labour that gathering and drying entail.

Fruit.—There can be no development of the fruit trade until a direct steamer service is established with New Zealand. Pineapples grow luxuriantly and without entailing much labour. Prior to 1914 a canning-factory was established by the Samoan Plantagen Gesellschaft. The German owners, however, could not obtain the financial assistance expected from Germany, and difficulty was experienced in importing tinsplate for can-making; therefore, notwithstanding the fact that the results were completely satisfactory, the concern was forced to go into liquidation. The revival of this business would be of some benefit to the local growers. No sugar is required in connection with the canning of pineapples.

Coconut-fibre.—No attempt has been made to deal with the fibre of the coconut-husks. At present some of it is used as fuel for drier furnaces. It is a most valuable fibre for rope and mat making, and we believe that if it were dressed and prepared the whole Samoan output could be advantageously utilized in New Zealand. This matter is worthy of serious attention. We understand the machinery necessary for the treatment and dressing of coconut-fibre is not extensive or costly to install.

Treatment of Copra.

The question of erecting a crushing plant for the treatment of copra has been dealt with in the Cook Island section of this report, and the remarks on the subject made there are also applicable to Samoa.

In order that British trade in island products may be stimulated we suggest that, if it is possible under the conditions of the mandate, a higher duty be charged on all copra, cocoa, and rubber exported from Samoa to foreign countries.

Agricultural Department.

We are of opinion that a tropical branch of the New Zealand Agricultural Department should be instituted, and that the various experts in Samoa and Cook Islands should be under its jurisdiction. The results of all experiments being carried on should be reported, through the Administrator, to the Department, and all information gained by the Department should be sent, through the Administrator, to these experts. We think, if this could be done, much overlapping and waste of energy might be avoided; information on many subjects common to both could be obtained, and results tabulated of experiments carried out in other tropical countries. As a matter of fact, the experts at both Samoa and Cook Islands have very similar problems to face, and each is trying to solve difficulties that the other may have solved, or which have been solved in other tropical countries. If these agriculturists were under the jurisdiction of the New Zealand Department the field of that Department's action would be much widened, and it would offer a more varied and interesting career to young men starting out in life.

It was stated that the wants of the Natives are few, and nature has provided them with all the necessities of life in exchange for a minimum of exertion. They are not, in their own island at least, looking for work. We are forced to the conclusion that if the trade of Samoa is to be developed it will not be rapidly done by Samoan labour; and this brings us to the most vital question affecting Western Samoa.