

CACAO.

Following on the stagnation of trade experienced throughout 1921, the year just ended has shown a period of slow but steady recovery in the cacao industry. The Natives, too, appear to be taking more interest in the cultivation of this crop than previously, but as a rule their plantings are intended to meet their own requirements only. There has been no outbreak of canker during the past year to justify alarm. Sporadic appearances of the disease occur from time to time, but on the whole the general situation may be considered as satisfactory.

NATIVE FOOD RESOURCES.

Formerly, plantings by the Samoans were carried out in a more or less haphazard fashion, but an attempt is now being made to place this work on a regular and systematic basis. According to the procedure now adopted, the Inspector and the Pulefaatoaga on their quarterly inspection meet the chiefs of each village, and the question of new plantings for the ensuing quarter is discussed and details agreed upon. Care is taken to see that the work required is fixed on a reasonable scale. In this way friction is avoided, while the substitution of regularity and method in place of haphazard cultivation should react beneficially on the Samoan character by inculcating habits of foresight and method in providing for the people's needs.

A tabulated statement is appended, showing that under this scheme, in addition to the provision of Native foodstuffs, 229,436 coconuts and 28,997 cacao-trees have been planted during the past year. The past year has in fact constituted something of a record in planting operations, and latterly it has been found necessary to curtail the work to enable weeding and cleaning up to be performed about the new cultivation. In former years it has occasionally happened that the Administration has received applications from the Samoans for assistance owing to a shortage of food, but there should be no need for applications of a like nature in the future.

The two European Inspectors have done much useful work by instructing the Samoans in proper methods of planting. Special attention has been given to the method of planting coconuts and cacao.

BEETLE-DESTRUCTION.

Reviewing the work of the past twelve months it can confidently be reaffirmed that the beetle is completely under control. The work of beetle-destruction has been carried on with undiminished vigor and there are now whole districts where very little trace of the beetle can be seen. This gratifying state of affairs has been achieved by the single method of clean cultivation combined with the weekly search. The Samoans now search at their own convenience, bringing in their weekly quota every Monday forenoon. The quota is fixed by the Department according to the state of the plantations in each area, and in some cases has had to be lowered almost to the vanishing-point on account of the scarcity of beetles in certain localities.

In every country where the coconut-beetle is found it is recognized that the sovereign remedy for the pest is clean cultivation, and experience shows that the pest increases in proportion as this precaution is neglected.

FLYING-FOX.

This formidable nuisance, so destructive to the fruit crop (especially to mangoes) shows no sign of abatement. During the year the Department has interested itself in the question of coping with the pest. In Queensland and in New South Wales, where its ravages are very pronounced, experiments have been made with liquid fire and mustard-gas, but it is understood that these dangerous expedients gave no adequate results. For the present the Department is relying on shooting as the most practical method of dealing with the flying-fox in Samoa, and issues of ammunition are allowed in exchange for a certain number of flying-fox feet. Although this method was tried only during the last few months of the year, it has so far achieved a fair measure of success, and will be continued.

AGRICULTURAL FARM.

Increased efforts have been made to supply the public of Apia with fresh vegetables, so desirable in the tropics in the interests of the health of the community. As evidence of the increased output of the farm it is interesting to note that the receipt from the sale of vegetables, &c., amounted to £921 5s. 8d. for the year just closed, as against £552 19s. 6d. for the previous year.

It has been demonstrated at the Agricultural Farm that most vegetables usually associated with more temperate climes can, with a little trouble, be successfully cultivated in Samoa, even on the lower lands approximating sea-level. Experiments with herbs and flowers are now under way.

The citrus-trees imported from California for experimental purposes nearly two years ago are making healthy headway, with the exception of one or two varieties of limes and pomoloes.

Future Prospects.

The prospects for the future are bright, as the possibilities of agricultural development in the Territory have by no means been exhausted. A promising field for enterprise lies in the cultivation of pineapples and bananas and in the promotion of a pineapple-canning industry.

Statement of Revenue derived from the Government Farm at Tulale for the Year ended 31st March, 1923, compared with that for the Preceding Year.

						£	s.	d.
1922—April to June	..	..	..	..	..	200	15	11
July to September	..	..	..	..	..	304	15	10
October to December	..	..	..	..	..	234	15	5
1923—January to March	..	..	..	..	..	180	18	6
Total for 1922-23	..	..	..	..	..	£921	5	8
Total for 1921-22	..	..	..	..	..	£552	19	6