

Appended is a table showing the population of the island at various dates and including all available figures:—

Year.	Population.	Remarks.	Year.	Population.	Remarks.
1859 ..	4,300	Mission estimate (incomplete).	1902 ..	4,051	Census, June.
1864 ..	5,010		1906 ..	3,801	
1875 ..	5,076		1911 ..	3,943	Census, November.
1883 ..	5,126		1916 ..	3,876	Census, October.
1884 ..	5,070		1921 ..	3,761	Census, April.
1887 ..	4,726		1921 ..	3,781	Registrar's records, 31st December.
1891 ..	4,482		1922 ..	3,779	
1893 ..	4,463		1923 ..	3,780	Registrar's records, 31st March.
1895 ..	4,433		1924 ..	3,796	
1900 ..	4,015				

Vital statistics are complete from the 1st April, 1901, to the 31st March, 1924, and these disclose the fact that deaths exceeded births during that period by 19 only. Yet from the above table it appears that since 1900 there has been a drop of 219 in population. It is therefore clear that migration and not an excessive mortality is the real danger in Niue. It is also fair to assume that the big drop visible in the mission period is largely due to migration. If further proof be wanted, the settlements of Niueans in Rarotonga, Apia, Pago Pago, and the larger islands of the Tongan Group provide confirmation. Other Niueans are spread through the remaining islands of the Pacific; many are at sea as sailors; and there is also a large colony in Auckland, whence a few of the hardier spirits are beginning to scatter through New Zealand. The majority of the Natives who are away are now permanently domiciled in the islands in which they reside; many have, through marriage, acquired homes and plantations, and some of the younger Natives have even forgotten their own tongue. The prospect of seeing them again in Niue is therefore remote. Formerly practically every young man spent some time at sea or abroad. Also, the scope for day labour in Niue is small. Therefore the younger men are clamorous to go; and, though they are willing to promise to return, the Resident Commissioner is satisfied that such promises for the most part would not be honoured. It is only a lack of shipping which has kept these men here of late years. In his report for 1922 the Resident Commissioner at Rarotonga recommended that there should be ample power to prevent Natives from leaving these islands without good reason, and such authority is urgently needed here. Such a step will no doubt be regarded by some as an unwarrantable liberty with the freedom of British subjects, but personally the Resident Commissioner regards these people as children—in a state of tutelage and as yet unfit for a full freedom. As they themselves have not yet acquired a regard for the future welfare of their own island, it is surely our duty to take some such step in their own interest.

#### MEDICAL SERVICE.

During the year an extensive campaign has been carried out against yaws, as a result of which the island can now be said to be fairly clean. The cases that remain are for the most part in the form of cracked feet, which is not an infectious form of the disease, and has accordingly been left to the last. Dr. Dorset, of the Western Samoa Administration, who relieved Dr. Collins in November, brought a simpler and less painful method of injection, which has found much favour with the Natives. Another important advance was the discovery by Dr. Dorset of the existence of hookworm in Niue. So far as can be ascertained, this disease has never been treated here, but the probabilities are that it is extremely common, and that the very prevalent cases of anæmia are due to it. Fortunately the treatment is both simple and cheap, and immediate steps are being taken to provide it. It is proposed to treat the whole population, village by village, for this complaint.

It will be observed that the deaths for 1923 are 103, as against 82 the previous year.

During the year Tupeli, the Samoan probationer nurse who was on loan to this Administration, completed her term and was returned to Samoa. Dr. Dorset is of opinion that the Niuean probationers are superior to the Samoan, and that there will be no further need to look outside the island in staffing the hospital.

During the year 144 patients were treated at the hospital, the average stay being seventeen days; 2,383 persons visited the dispensary, and the Medical Officer visited out-villages on 224 occasions, in most cases more than one patient being visited. In addition 846 injections for yaws were given.

#### POSTAL.

The following figures show the postal business transacted during the year, the total volume of business amounting to £5,566 3s. 7d. Money-orders—issued, £846 14s. 3d.; paid, £547 15s. Savings-bank—deposits, £2,017 14s.; withdrawn, £626 11s. Postal notes—issued, £90 3s. 11d.; paid, £12 17s. 6d. Miscellaneous payments, £1,038 1s. 8d.

#### METEOROLOGICAL.

Summarized, the readings for 1923 are as follows: Barometer (mean for year), 30.03. Thermometer—highest, 98, in February; lowest, 56, in October; mean maximum, 83.71; mean minimum, 68.48. Rainfall, 84.71 in. Rain fell on 115 days.

There is nothing special to chronicle under this heading. The hurricane season passed without the least semblance of a blow. The rainfall was abnormal, but there was very little of the oppressive heat usual at that time of year.