

ANNUAL REPORT BY THE ADMINISTRATOR FOR THE YEAR 1926-27.

THE following Annual Report on Western Samoa for the year 1926-27 is submitted in a similar form to the one for the previous year. It comprises (1) the Administrator's covering remarks, (2) departmental reports, and (3) answers to the League of Nations Questionnaire.

I. OFFICIAL VISITS.

In May last Their Excellencies the Governor-General Sir Charles and Lady Alice Fergusson paid an official visit to the Territory and remained for eight days, during which time they visited nearly all the Native districts on the north coast of Upolu and two districts in Savai'i. The enthusiastic and large assemblies of Natives, the spontaneous preparations and ceremonies made in their honour, together with the unanimous expressions of loyalty and satisfaction, were indications of the feelings of the Samoan people towards His Majesty the King and the Government which protects them. His Excellency the Governor-General also met the great majority of the European residents in Apia, whose sentiments of loyalty were appropriately expressed in their formal address presented to him.

In February last three Native representatives travelled to New Zealand to participate, with Native chiefs of other sections of the Polynesian race under New Zealand control, in the reception ceremonies given to Their Royal Highnesses The Duke and Duchess of York. They were the guests of the New Zealand Government. These three Samoan chiefs were selected by the Fono of Faipules, and were requested to represent and speak on behalf of the whole Native race in Western Samoa.

II. TRADE.

A reduction in the principal exports—copra and cacao—for the trade year January to December, 1926, was anticipated owing to the long drought, following a storm in January, 1926, both of which diminished the crops. The fall in the market price of copra during the latter months of the year also affected trade in two ways—viz., from the reduced values of exports and the consequent diminished production; for when the price of copra is low the Natives hesitate to cut more than is necessary to provide for their immediate needs, and prefer to wait and anticipate an advance in price. The disadvantages under which the Natives labour in regard to marketing their copra are referred to on page 6. Imports exceeded exports by £4,157. This adverse balance was caused by the usual December export shipment of copra and cacao being delayed until early in January of this year, otherwise there would have been a favourable trade balance, about equal to last year.

The prospects for the ensuing year are particularly good, as the plantations nearly all show signs of fairly heavy crops. New areas of coconuts are coming into bearing. Cacao plantations have recovered from the blow of last year, and the trees are bearing well. All the rubber plantations excepting one owned by a private company are being developed. Larger areas of cotton are being put under cultivation, and extensive planting of bananas has been carried out in preparation for the proposed export of fruit to New Zealand. It is hopefully anticipated, therefore, that this will be a record year for trade.