

Rubber exports have increased by 100 tons, and as all the rubber areas are now being developed it is anticipated that a record output will be realized this year—viz., approximately 200 tons.

The copra exports fell short of the figures for the preceding year by 600 tons. The total amount, however, fell short of anticipations by about 2,000 tons, due to lack of effort on the part of the Natives. The average market price for copra covering the period of the trade year was £26 2s. 6d. The average price received by the Natives from Apia merchants was £10 6s. 11d. per ton, but two parcels shipped by the Administration on behalf of the Native growers realized a net return to the Natives of £15 18s. 1d. and £16 18s. 1d. respectively. Interesting reference to this is made on pages 338–40 of the Samoan Royal Commission Report, 1927. A table showing the estimated total all-in cost per ton of high-grade copra up to the time of landing in the United Kingdom or on the Continent is given on page 13 herein.

III. NATIVE AFFAIRS.

(See also Statement on Political Agitation on page 2, and Chart in Appendix D.)

(a) NATIVE LEGISLATION.

The Faipules assembled on two occasions during the year—viz., in May, 1927, and February, 1928.

The proceedings of the May Fono, and the Faipules' address to the Administrator dated the 11th February, 1928 are attached (see Appendix A).

At the assembly in February the ordinary business was suspended and the discussions were confined to considering ways and means to reunite the two parties of Natives and restore the peaceful and prosperous conditions that existed prior to the European Committee interfering in Native political affairs. During the Fono endeavours were made by invitations to those chiefs in the so-called "Mau" Committee to meet the Faipules to become reconciled and discuss matters together for the general welfare of the Samoan people. These chiefs refused, however, to meet either the Faipules or the Administrator, and it is believed that this irreconcilable attitude was due to the fact that they had received instructions not to co-operate in any way with Government officials or with the Government and to continue to oppose constituted authority.

The chiefs and orators of each district have the power not only to nominate in accordance with Native custom their own Faipule representative to fill vacancies, but also to nominate a chief in place of their present Faipule if they can show good reason for the latter being superseded. This cannot, however, be carried out while there are two political parties of Natives who refuse to unite.

There are now three vacancies for Faipules which have not been filled owing to the inability of the chiefs and orators of the districts concerned to agree to the appointment of one of their number.

(b) EDUCATION.

The evil effects of the so-called Mau movement were felt by the Education Department in the earlier part of the year. Many Natives who had associated themselves with the European Committee in Apia not only declined to co-operate in any way with the Government or with Native officials, but refused to allow their children to attend Government schools. This applied particularly to the combined Government and mission schools in out-districts. This attitude of the Mau Natives was apparently later realized to be a foolish one and they subsequently adopted the opposite attitude and urged attendance at schools.

Two senior Native school-teachers were sent to New Zealand in January for the purpose of widening their knowledge and seeing modern methods of teaching in various schools in New Zealand.

(c) CULTIVATION OF NATIVE LANDS.

(See Graph and Chart in Appendix D.)

With a view to helping the Natives the New Zealand Government purchased a ship which will be used, among other purposes, for promoting a fruit-export trade between Samoa and the Dominion. This ship is due to arrive here in May next.

Natives were urged to plant areas of bananas and carefully cultivate them in readiness for export. In a number of districts the Samoans took up this matter with enthusiasm, but as a result of the Mau movement they have failed to support the scheme and have ceased work on their banana plantations. The latter have become neglected and unproductive. The European planters have now taken up this industry, and they, together with the New Zealand Estates, will supply practically all the bananas and other fruit for export.

A large area of alienated land belonging to the New Zealand Estates has been made available to the Natives in Falealili district for the purpose of dividing and allocating it amongst individual taxpayers, but during the past year, owing to Mau activities, in most other districts cultivation of Native lands has been neglected.

IV. CHINESE LABOUR.

There were 935 Chinese and 146 Melanesian labourers on the 31st March, 1928, compared with 946 and 155 respectively a year previously.

The fact that the Melanesians do not wish to be repatriated, and that large numbers of Chinese when due for repatriation apply for permission to extend their engagement or to remain permanently in the Territory, indicates that the the imported labourers are satisfied with their treatment and the conditions under which they labour.

The experiments on Government plantations gradually to substitute Samoans for Chinese have shown that it will be many years before local Native labour can be obtained for permanent work.