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FIJI.

REPORT FOR 1924.

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COLONIAL REPORTS—ANNUAL.

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ANNUAL GENERAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1924.

General.

GEOGRAPHICAL.

The Colony of Fiji is situated in the Southern Pacific Ocean and lies between latitude 15° and 22° south, and between longitude 177° west, and 175° east.

The Fijian Group is comprised of about 250 islands of varying sizes from the island of Vitilevu, which covers 4,053 square miles, to mere rocks measuring a few yards in circumference. About eighty islands are inhabited. Other large islands besides Vitilevu are Vanualevu (2,128 square miles), Taveuni (166 square miles), and Kadavu (165 square miles). The total area of the Colony (including the islands of Rotuma) is 7,083 square miles, or nearly the size of Wales. Suva, the capital, is situated on the island of Vitilevu, and is distant 1,743 miles from Sydney, New South Wales, and 1,140 miles from Auckland, New Zealand.

The islands of Rotuma lie between 12° and 15° south and 175° and 180° east, and are a dependency of Fiji.

The whole group itself is situated midway between the Tongan or Friendly Islands and the French Colony of New Caledonia. The largest island, Vitilevu, measures about 96 miles from east to west, and about 63 miles from north to south, while the island of Vanualevu, situated north-east of Vitilevu, is 114 miles in length and averages in breadth some 26 miles. Other islands of economic importance are Taveuni, Kadavu, and the smaller islands of Rabi, and the Yasawa, Lomaiviti and Lau Groups.

The islands of Fiji owe their origin to volcanic upheaval and to the busy operations of the coral polyps. There are, however, no active volcanoes in the Colony, but several of the high mountains, as for instance, Nabukelevu, on Kadavu, and the summit of the island of Taveuni, were formidable craters in past times. In several places throughout the islands hot springs are met with, those best known being situated at Savusavu on the island of Vanualevu, on the Waidina River, north of Suva, and on several of the islands of the Lomaiviti Group. Although Fiji appears not to be the focus of volcanic action, masses of pumice stone, drifting at intervals on the shores of the Colony, indicate the proximity of submarine disturbances.

* A sketch map will be found in the Report for 1914, No. 848. (Cd. 7622-39.)

The highest altitude reached in Fiji is Mount Victoria, which rises to a height of 4,550 feet and is situated at the north-eastern extremity of the main mountain system of Vitilevu. Other mountains worthy of mention on the same island are Mount Pickering (3,550 feet), Muanivatu (4,000 feet), Mount Evans (4,020 feet) and Korobasabasaga (3,960 feet). The highest peak on Vanualevu rises to 3,437 feet, and on Taveuni to 4,040 feet. The slopes of these altitudes are, for the most part, densely wooded, but only in a few places can virgin forests be said to exist. Fijians for ages past have used the same system of agriculture as at present, felling new areas of forest for their crops when the fertility of the old has become exhausted, and it may be due in some measure to these methods that secondary rather than virgin forests generally appear to be re-established. The forests of Fiji, although only lightly explored, yield useful timber in considerable quantity.

Of brilliant flowers there are few, but the Yasiyasi (*Engonia Rivularis*) when in flower are exceedingly gorgeous, whilst a terrestrial orchid (*Phajus*) and two or three mountain *Dendrobium*s are also noteworthy. The majority of the native flowers are, however, white, many being beautifully scented. In the Bua Province the country is park-like, and *Eugenia*s, sweetly-scented *Jasmines*, and "Buas" abound.

Fiji possesses a great variety of bird life. Of indigenous birds there are about 100 known species, and, in addition, imported species number approximately fifteen. A complete ornithological survey of the Group has not yet, however, been made, although an interesting and a valuable report on the subject has been written by Dr. Casey A. Wood, M.D., LL.D., of Chicago, U.S.A., who spent some months in the Colony investigating the subject. Useful and ornamental birds are protected by law, and the shooting of birds of any kind is confined practically to the white population and to the comparatively few natives and Indians who are permitted the use of arms.

Most of the shore birds seen on the coasts of Fiji are migrants, although some of them nest on the islands. These include the Godwit (*Limosa uropygialis*), the Lesser Golden Plover (*Charadrius dominicus fuscus*), Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*), and several other visitors. Native bird life principally finds its habitat in the forest.

Butterfly life is not extensive or brilliant in feature, the few species that exist being forms of the New Guinea type. Dragonflies abound in great numbers and in considerable variety, and are said to play an important part in keeping the number of mosquitoes within limits.

Formerly, there were several varieties of snakes, all harmless, to be found throughout the Group, but these are now confined to those islands where the mongoose has not been liberated, and on those islands also lizard life is abundant.

HISTORICAL.

Fijian history as recounted by native tradition may be said to have begun with the advent of the white race.

The islands of the Colony were discovered by the Dutch navigator Abel Jansen Tasman, when exploring the South Seas, in 1643. He named the group "Prins Wilhelm's Eylanden," which the inhabitants collectively termed "Viti." Neighbouring Tongans, as well as other nations, erroneously designated the islands as Fiji, and it is by this name that the Colony is now known to all except its native inhabitants. The islands were only nominally known until visited about a century afterwards by D'Urville and Wilks, Captain Cook, who merely sighted Vatoa or Turtle Island, Captain Bligh, who twice passed through the southern portion of the Group, and Captain Wilson, whose vessel, the *Duff*, was nearly lost on the reef off Taveuni. These navigators added little, however, save second-hand information to the common stock of knowledge concerning the people. It is recounted that, after the mutiny of his sailors in the *Bounty*, Captain Bligh, on passing through the Yasawa Group in a boat from his ship, was espied and pursued by natives of the island of Waya. He again passed through other parts of the Group when in command of H.M.S. "Province" in 1792.

Towards the close of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth, Fiji began to be visited by vessels from the East Indies, which came in search of sandalwood and bêche-de-mer for the Chinese market.

The inhabitants at that time, and indeed for many years afterwards, were regarded as ferocious savages, and in dealing with them traders had to exercise great caution. Several of the crews of these vessels, however, took up their residence on shore, and they may be regarded as having been the first white immigrants.

About the year 1808 there was wrecked on the reef off the island of Nairai the American brig *Eliza*, with 40,000 dollars from the River Plate. The greater part of the crew escaped, but two of them took passage in native canoes which happened at the time to be in the vicinity of the wreck. One landed at Bau and the other at Verata. The former, a Swede named Charles Savage, acquired great ascendancy in the Kingdom of Bau, where he taught the natives the use of fire-arms, thus affording them a considerable advantage in intertribal warfare. Other foreigners, for a similar reason, soon acquired a welcome in the several states which were then struggling for supremacy. An Irishman named Conner attained in Rewa a similar position to that of Savage in Bau. Savage died in March, 1814, near the island of Vanualevu, where he carried on a war with the natives for the purpose of procuring a cargo of sandalwood for an English trading vessel, the *Hunter* of Calcutta. Together with some of his crew he was killed and eaten, his bones being converted into needles and distributed amongst the people as a memento of

victory. Conner's fate was less tragic in character. He paid less heed to the affairs of state, and even when, after the death of his royal patron, misfortune overtook him, he was able to resort to the proverbial humour of his race and preserve to some extent the goodwill of the Rewa natives by the narration of tales for their amusement. It was upon this faculty that he depended for a livelihood rather than upon the rearing of pigs and fowls for barter with the people.

The first missionaries to arrive in Fiji came from Tonga in October, 1835. They commenced their labours at a time when the political state of Fiji was unknown, at Lakeba, in the Lau or Eastern Group, which was a vassal state, and by their attention to these lesser people they provoked the jealousy of the chiefs of the sovereign state of Cakaudrove, who lived in Somosomo. Later, when at the last-named village the work of Christianisation began, the chiefs continued to oppose the spread of the new doctrine by all means in their power. Similarly, when the missioners established themselves at Rewa, and at Viwa, which lies close to Bau, they experienced the same opposition. The whole influence of the Bauans was exercised against the work of the mission, and it has been suggested that many atrocities were committed at Bau to prove to the missionaries operating from Viwa how little Bau was influenced by the religious change proceeding in other parts of the Group. Finally, in 1854, King Cakabou adopted Christianity, and heathenism was conquered. Cannibalism among his people had been one of their institutions; it was interwoven in the elements of society, and it was defeated only after long and hazardous missionary effort.

In 1858 the United States corvette *Vandalia* arrived at Levuka, and the Commander, Captain Sinclair, preferred claims against Cakabou, as King of Fiji, amounting to 45,000 dollars. Cakabou induced Captain Sinclair to allow him twelve months in which to meet the demand. Interviews in respect of these claims between Cakabou and the British Consul led to an offer of the cession of the Islands to Great Britain, on the condition that the American claims were paid by the British Government, for which payment, as a direct equivalent, certain land, "if required," was to be granted in fee simple, besides the general sovereignty of the whole Group. Subsequently, on the 14th of December, 1859, the Chiefs of Fiji "acknowledged, ratified, and renewed the Cession of Fiji to Great Britain made on the 12th of October, 1858." The offer was declined by Her Britannic Majesty's Government in 1862.

About this time the demand for cotton, arising from the American Civil War, led to an influx of Europeans into Fiji for the purpose of cotton cultivation, and in June, 1871, the settlers endeavoured to establish a settled form of government with the principal Bauan Chief, Cakabou, as King of Fiji. A constitution was agreed upon and a parliament was elected, but it was not

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long before the parliament and the Government drifted into mutual hostility, and latterly the Ministry governed without the aid of parliament.

In both Australia and England the annexation of Fiji had been urged since 1869, and in August, 1873, the Earl of Kimberley commissioned Commodore Goodenough, commanding the squadron on the Australian Station, and Mr. E. L. Layard, then Her Majesty's Consul in Fiji, to investigate and report on the matter. The Commissioners, on the 21st of March, 1874, reported on the offer of the sovereignty of the islands from the chiefs, with the assent of the Europeans, but on certain terms which were not acceptable, and Sir Hercules Robinson, then Governor of New South Wales, was despatched to Fiji in September, 1874, to negotiate.

The mission was completely successful, and the sovereignty of the islands was ceded to the Crown by Cakabou, the Chief of Bau, Maafu, who was the Chief of the Lau Confederacy, and the other principal chiefs, in a deed of Cession dated the 10th of October, 1874. A Charter was shortly afterwards issued by Her Majesty Queen Victoria creating the islands a separate Colony and providing for their government as a Crown Colony.

CONSTITUTION.

The Constitution is regulated by Letters Patent of the 31st of January, 1914, as amended by Letters Patent of the 20th of July, 1916.

The Governor is advised by an Executive Council, which at present consists of the Colonial Secretary and the Attorney-General as ex-officio members, two other official members, and two nominated unofficial members. The Legislative Council, as constituted by the Letters Patent, consists of the Governor, not more than twelve nominated members (of whom eleven must be persons holding public offices in the Colony), seven elected members, and two native members.

The English Common Law and the Statutes of general application which were in force in England in the year 1875, when the Colony obtained a local legislature, extend to the Colony as far as local circumstances render such extension suitable, and are subject to modifications by Colonial Ordinances.

LOCAL ADMINISTRATION.

Under the Municipal Institutions Ordinance of 1909, the administration of the towns of Suva and Levuka is in the hands of Municipal Councils elected by the ratepayers. The Municipal Councils have jurisdiction over sanitation and public health, markets, slaughter-houses, traffic regulations, building construction and the control of places and streets within the towns. Their revenues are mainly derived from Government grants, licences and rates. The Central Board of Health, which is composed of official and unofficial members appointed by the Governor, administers the Public Health Ordinance of 1911, and

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is empowered to make regulations in regard to the carrying out of the Ordinance. The Colony is divided into urban and rural sanitary districts in which local authorities, subject to the control of the Central Board of Health, administer the Public Health Ordinance in their respective districts.

The Board of Education, appointed by the Governor, directs the policy in regard to education, and is authorized to pass by-laws on all matters pertaining to education within the Colony.

The Central Road Board, composed of official and unofficial members, is responsible for the maintenance of existing roads and for new construction, and is assisted by Local Road Boards appointed in each district.

Ordinance No. 15 of 1923 provides for an improved Fire Brigade Service for the town of Suva. A suitable station has been erected and up-to-date plant imported, including a latest pattern Dennis turbine motor engine.

The control of the Fire Brigade is vested in a Board of Fire Commissioners.

THE COLONY'S JUBILEE.

Historically, the important feature of the year 1924 was, of course, the celebration at Levuka, on the 10th October, 1924, of Fiji's jubilee as a Crown Colony. After fifty years of British rule, at the same place and hour the same "lali" or native drum was beaten by the old Chief who beat it at Cession, announcing to the many people present the commencement of ceremonies arranged in honour of the occasion and of the presence of the Acting Governor. His Excellency was accompanied by His Honour the Chief Justice, Members of the Executive Council, and the Commander and Officers of H.M.S. "Laburnum."

Peace was the object of the Cession by the Chiefs of their country, and the Fijian appreciates the peace that for nearly fifty years has remained unbroken "throughout the land"; prosperity also was the desire of those Europeans living here then who advocated the offer and the acceptance of the Cession, and there has been more than ordinary prosperity. The value of trade has grown from £198,000 in 1876 to £2,565,528 in 1924; an advance due mainly to the development of the sugar industry and the accretions to the Colony's population which that development has entailed. But apart from material considerations, the progress of the native race has been considerable. It is not many decades since he was a savage of the most barbarous kind. From that condition, owing in the first place to the efforts of the Missions, and in the second to the combined endeavour of the Missions and the Government, he has been raised to a comparatively high state of civilisation. To-day the Fijian is a law-abiding and a loyal citizen of the Empire.

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The administrative policy of the Government in Fijian matters continues to be that founded by the late Lord Stanmore (of whom to-day the Fijians still speak with unimpaired devotion), who administered native affairs in such a way as to harmonise with native custom, adhering to those customs which were best and eliminating the worst. The system which he inaugurated has endured successfully to the great benefit and contentment of the people.

Fifty years have brought about a vast change in the constitution of the Colony's population, which at Cession consisted almost entirely of aboriginal natives and some 2,000 Europeans and other whites. The native population at the present time, while being still the largest section of the community, numbers only approximately 20,000 more than the total Indian population, and, notwithstanding repatriation, less than three times the number of Indians born in the Colony since immigration first commenced in 1879.

THE BRITISH EMPIRE EXHIBITION.

The year was marked also by the Colony's participation in the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley and by the visit to England of three native Chiefs who, in accordance with the native custom of "sikovi" observed on auspicious occasions, paid homage and conveyed the dutiful respects of the Fijian race to their Great Chief, His Majesty the King. The gracious message which His Majesty sent to his subjects in Fiji on the 10th of October, and his reception of their Chiefs were a source of much gratification to the Fijian race and to all sections of the community.

That wide attention was drawn to this Colony at the Exhibition is shown by the great number of communications that have been received from persons seeking information regarding the Colony. In the words of Sir Bickham Escott, K.C.M.G., the Colony's representative, the Fiji Court, though perhaps the smallest at the Exhibition, was by no means the least attractive. The Colony is grateful to Sir Bickham Escott and to Sir Maynard Hedstrom, the Commissioner, for their untiring efforts to bring Fiji prominently not only to the notice of visitors to the Exhibition but generally to the notice of the world. The following extract from the report submitted by Sir Maynard Hedstrom, the Commissioner, on his return to the Colony, is of interest:—

"Your Excellency will doubtless desire an expression of my opinion as to the benefits which will accrue to the Colony as a result of its participation in the British Empire Exhibition. I think this question must be considered from the standpoint adopted by the Right Honourable the Secretary of State for the Colonies when he said: 'I tell you the British peoples will not measure the value of Wembley within the compass of a balance sheet.'

“ The Exhibition will show a heavy financial loss and yet the British peoples will judge it a great success. It has been a splendid gathering of the British Confederation, and it has been of very great educational value, particularly to the people of England. Millions of people have learned more about the Empire and its possibilities than they ever knew before, and many thousands of visitors from overseas have been drawn closer together and to the Mother Country by means of this Exhibition. In this great educational work Fiji has taken its full share, and it would have been a mistake and a misfortune if the Colony had refrained from participation. Some Colonies can show practical and tangible results from the Exhibition. It is said that Burmah, with its great supplies of teak, found new and greater markets. Canada, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand each had definite objects : (a) to encourage immigration ; (b) to popularise their products ; and no doubt gained considerable success in both directions.

“ In the case of Colonies like Hongkong, Ceylon, Malta, etc., the objects were less clear and definite, but their Courts were like great bazaars, and the profits on goods sold should help to pay the cost of their representation.

“ Fiji has no authorised scheme of migration to offer the casual inquirer ; it is not definitely in search of a new market for its products, and it did not establish a bazaar for the sale of souvenirs and trinkets. I believe the main result of our representation has been to make Fiji and its possibilities better known through Great Britain and the Empire than ever before.”

VISIT OF THE SPECIAL SERVICE SQUADRON.

Fiji was fortunate in its inclusion in the itinerary of the World Cruise of the Special Service Squadron in May under the command of Vice-Admiral Sir Frederick L. Field, K.C.B., C.M.G. The Squadron remained in Suva Harbour for six days, and its visit was the source of the greatest pleasure and satisfaction to local residents, who co-operated whole-heartedly in providing a round of entertainment for officers and men. In response to a request made by the residents of Levuka, Sir Frederick Field was good enough to vary the Squadron's course after leaving Suva and to steam past Levuka close to the entrance to the Harbour, thus enabling the residents of the old capital to have a near view of the vessels under his command. The Vice-Admiral's courtesy in this matter was much appreciated.

The visit of the Special Service Squadron of the Fleet in May forms a landmark in the history of the Fijians. The Fleet was met at the entrance to the Harbour by native canoes, and a native welcome consisting of chiefly ceremonies and dances was later given to the officers and men of the Squadron. At the

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invitation of the Acting Governor many of the officers visited the Island of Beqa and witnessed native dances and an exhibition of fire-walking. Many thousands of natives congregated in Suva and visited the warships which created in their minds an impression of unimaginable strength and power. The visit of the Special Service Squadron will be the subject of song and legend amongst the natives for many years to come.

THE GOVERNOR.

On the 19th January His Excellency Sir C. H. Rodwell, K.C.M.G., proceeded on leave to England, and the administration of Government was assumed by the Honourable T. E. Fell, C.M.G., Colonial Secretary, who acted as Governor throughout the year. On the 10th October Sir C. H. Rodwell relinquished the appointment.

LANDS AND SURVEYS.

Transactions in native and Crown lands in 1924 showed a general increase of about 18 per cent. above the figures for 1923. Indian settlement continued to expand in the sugar districts, and an increased demand for grazing leases of hill land on the fringes of the cane areas was noticeable. In any agricultural community, subject to increase from natural causes only, the number of applications for leases of land is an index of its prosperity, and it is apparent that the Indian inhabitants of this Colony, at any rate in the sugar areas, are enjoying a reasonable return from the fruits of their labours. The opening of the first section of the " Prince's Road " has resulted in the settling of native lands along its route, by Indians. This area lies from four to eight miles from Suva, and the crops cultivated consist chiefly of vegetables, pineapples, bananas and yaqona (Kava). A proportion of the fruit is exported to New Zealand and the balance finds a ready local market.

Nine hundred and forty-two applications for leases of native lands aggregating 20,400 acres were received, and of these 493 applications for 5,996 acres were approved and 236 applications for 8,936 acres were under consideration at the end of the year. Applications by Indians formed 89 per cent. of the total, the remainder being distributed equally under the two heads " Europeans " and " Others " (including Chinese, Fijians and Polynesians).

Ninety-six applications for leases of Crown lands aggregated 10,798 acres. Of these fifty applications for 1,486 acres were approved and thirty-five for 6,813 acres were under consideration at the end of the year, the remainder having been declined or withdrawn. The number of documents relating to leases of Crown and native lands sent to the Registrar of Titles Office for registration increased from 799 in 1923 to 906 in 1924. Two hundred and sixty-one plans of surveys of native and Crown

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leases were examined and passed during the year, being an increase of forty-five on the figures for 1923. The position regarding the survey of leases had for some years been unsatisfactory, and during the year certain amendments were made to the regulations governing the approval of leases with the result that, henceforth, surveys of leases will be arranged by the Government, and will not, as heretofore, be a matter of contract between the lessee and a private surveyor. New Regulations under the Surveyors' Ordinance were also brought into force providing for the better control of the private surveyors and for a higher and more modern standard of work.

PUBLIC WORKS.

The main public works undertaken during the year were as follows :—

- (a) Completion of Prince's Road, providing a circular motor route 28 miles in extent, opened to public traffic in October. This road will long be associated with the name of Mr. C. B. Sealy, Public Works Department Surveyor, who was murdered on the 1st August, 1924, near the seven-mile post whilst conveying wages to be paid to the labourers working on the road.
- (b) The ferry crossing Rewa River, between Davuilevu and Nausori, was improved by the completion of a groin about 500 feet in length, which also serves the purpose of a causeway. The effects of this work on the river bed have been extremely satisfactory, and the ferry service now proceeds without interruption.
- (c) The Colonial War Memorial Hospital was completed in November at a cost of about £54,000. This institution, which is complete with all modern facilities, should meet the central medical requirements of the Colony for many years to come.
- (d) Construction was commenced on the Indian Hospital at Lautoka, and Joint Provincial School at Nadi.
- (e) Work was commenced on the beaconing of Fiji waters.

The normal work of the Department concerning the maintenance of roads, bridges, buildings, water supplies, etc., was carried out without important incident and as far as funds permitted.

Although the services of labourers were not always easy to obtain, the supply was, as a rule, sufficient, and no change was made in the rate of wages.

TRADE AND COMMERCE.

The total trade of the Colony, as previously stated, amounted to £2,565,528, which exceeds by £23,000 the total trade of the previous year. This condition is due mainly to additional imports (£77,534), which were counterbalanced, however, by a falling off

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of exports (£53,305). Exports of sugar were less in value to the extent of £97,577, although the quantity exceeded slightly that exported in 1923. On the other hand the exports of copra, though less in quantity owing to abnormal rainfall, exceeded in value the exports of the previous year by a sum in excess of £41,000. Bananas exported were valued at £21,000 more than in 1923, and in other domestic exports, excepting molasses, satisfactory improvement was shown. Of these an increase in the value of trocas shell from £12,430 to £21,565 showed the greatest comparative rise.

Figures show that there has been a slight decrease in trade with the United Kingdom, the volume of trade being less in 1924 than during either of the two previous years by approximately 2 per cent. These figures cannot, however, be regarded as accurate, for the reason that cargoes of copra intended originally for sale at European ports may not necessarily be so disposed of, but may, subsequent to shipment, be sold in the English market. Imports, however, from the United Kingdom are satisfactorily maintained owing in part to direct steamship communication by which goods may be imported from the United Kingdom at rates of freight which do not exceed the rates charged in respect of goods carried between England and the Commonwealth of Australia.

DEVELOPMENT OF NEW INDUSTRIES.

The main agricultural industries of the Colony have for long been the production of sugar, copra, and bananas. Of recent years the first has been hampered by difficulties in obtaining a sufficient labour supply, and by a great increase in the world's production. The second has suffered from a restricted market and a considerable fall in price, and the third both from the existence of plant disease and a protective Customs tariff in Australia. In these circumstances the development of new industries has appeared to be essential to the welfare of the Colony, and some success has attended the efforts made by Government towards that end.

RICE.

The new rice industry is becoming well established. In addition to the Government rice mill a small milling plant has been erected by a commercial firm at Suva.

The Government rice mill was in continuous operation from the beginning of the year until the end of June, when supplies of local paddy were exhausted. To meet the demand for rice for the balance of the year the Government imported 565 tons from Australia. During the year the mill disposed of 1,211 tons of rice, of which 900 tons were of local production, and 311 tons imported, the total value being £23,630. In addition paddy and by-products to the value of £468 were disposed of. The quantity of rice disposed of represents approximately 1,860 tons of paddy.

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Accounts for the complete year's trading of the mill are not yet available, but the books disclose that at the end of June the net profit on six months' trading was £3,000. Owing to the shortage of paddy a loss of £1,000 is anticipated during the second half of the year.

In accordance with an undertaking to share profits with growers, who are almost entirely East Indians, a bonus of £1 per ton on the 1923 paddy crop was paid during the year, £1,160 being distributed.

The quantities of rice imported during the last three years were :—

1922	...	707 tons		
1923	...	205 tons		
1924	...	658 tons, including 565 tons imported by the Government owing to crop shortage.		

Sales of local rice for these years were :—

1922	...	157 tons	...	...	value £3,800
1923	...	810 tons	...	...	value £15,200
1924	...	900 tons	...	...	value £17,380

Merchants and planters prefer locally-grown rice, and there is no doubt that had paddy stocks been available the whole of the quantity disposed of would have been of local production. This increasing demand for Fiji-grown rice indicates satisfaction with both quality and price. The export trade which was being established with neighbouring islands had to be abandoned owing to shortage of paddy, but no difficulty is anticipated in renewing the connections made when supplies permit of an export trade again being considered.

In addition to rice produced in mills, and to imports, the industry has established a considerable trade in rice between the Indian growers and their fellow countrymen, and store-keepers. Practically every grower retains part of his paddy crop, which is hand-milled and used for his own needs or disposed of to others. It is impossible to give a true estimate of the quantity thus disposed of, but it must be considerable.

Owing to drought during the planting season, a most unusual occurrence, the paddy crop was a very small one, only 600 tons being available for purchase by the mill. This will be milled early in 1925. Prospects for the 1925 crop are good and the quantity produced should be large.

The industry, which is capable of further development, is of considerable importance to this Colony with its large East Indian population. As a step towards further development the Government has established a small experimental area where imported heavy-bearing varieties of paddy will be tested and from which pure seed of proved quality and suitability will be distributed.

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COTTON.

The cultivation of cotton was, at one time, one of the chief if not the principal industry of the Colony. The maximum export was in 1879 when 292 tons were exported. Owing to a fall in price, however, exports declined until 1900, when the cultivation of cotton ceased.

In 1922 the Government introduced seed of the "Sea Island" variety for distribution to intending growers, and during the following year approximately 101 bales containing $14\frac{3}{4}$ tons of lint were shipped to the United Kingdom for disposal, realising an average price of 2s. per lb.

The quantity exported in respect of the 1924 season was 180 bales containing $27\frac{1}{4}$ tons, an increase of 85 per cent. over export for the previous season.

Reports received from the British Cotton Growing Association and the purchasers speak highly of the quality of the cotton, and it is anticipated that, with the additional knowledge gained by the growers, the quality will be maintained or improved upon. It is interesting to record that of the 1923 crop, 10.5 per cent. was graded as first quality, while for the 1924 crop the percentage of first quality was 25.7.

The cultivation of cotton is almost entirely in the hands of East Indians who tend small areas. The seed cotton is collected by the Government, conveyed to the Government ginnery, ginned and baled, and is exported to the United Kingdom for sale. The Government makes advances on seed cotton supplied and meets all costs of ginning and marketing. When the proceeds are available, the advances made and cost of ginning and marketing are deducted therefrom, and any balance remaining is distributed amongst growers.

For the 1923 crop advances of 2d. and 1d. per lb. were made, and the final payments were 3d. and $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. per lb. for 1st and 2nd qualities respectively. During 1924 the advances were increased to 4d., 3d., 2d., and 1d. per lb. according to quality, and these rates have been guaranteed for the 1925 season as well.

Colonel G. Evans, Director of Cotton Culture, Queensland, visited the Colony at the request of the Government in August, and inspected most of the cotton areas, and his recommendations for the development of the industry are now receiving consideration.

PINEAPPLES.

As a result of the visit to Canada of the Colonial Treasurer during the early months of the year, it is the intention to embark on an experiment, in conjunction with the Dominion Cannery, Limited, of Canada, in the growing and canning of pineapples. During the year a number of cases of pines were sent to Canada and were canned and returned to the Colony. The result of this

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minor experiment was such as to lead to the belief that Fiji pineapples should compare favourably with those of other countries which now supply the world's market.

Some thousands of cases of pineapples are exported annually to New Zealand. These, however, are grown in small plots, with little cultivation, by Indian settlers in the vicinity of Suva.

The varieties found in Fiji are the Ripley Queen and the smooth-leaved Cayenne. The former is a fine yellow-fleshed sweet pine, with a delightful flavour, which averages about 4 lb. in weight. The Cayenne is a larger pine now extensively used for canning purposes in Hawaii. This latter variety is being used in the experimental plots which are intended to supply the proposed cannery. The successful development of the scheme for the commercial cultivation of pineapples and the establishment of canning factories in Fiji will provide a new and an important industry in the Colony.

DAIRYING.

The dairying industry, having expanded beyond the experimental stage, continues to develop, and it may be said that the production of butter for local consumption practically equals the average quantity imported prior to the establishment of the factories. Imports of butter during 1924, which amounted to 24.02 tons valued at £4,615, were necessitated by exceptionally rainy weather extending over a considerable period. Owing to these rains, work on farms at the Returned Sailors' and Soldiers' Dairy Scheme at Tailevu was greatly hampered, and for some time pasturages were seriously affected. During the year a Committee of Legislative Council was appointed to enquire into the condition of affairs at the Tailevu Dairy Settlement, but as yet, owing to various circumstances, no report has been received. Notwithstanding, however, these adverse circumstances, the butter fat purchased by the factory from soldier settlers was more than 7 per cent. in excess of the amount so purchased during 1923, and the output of butter was increased by 29 per cent. The mill's profit on the working account for the year was £337 15s. 2d.

In August last another butter factory was opened at Rewa at a site 14 miles from Suva, which is easily accessible by motor vehicle or vessel and lies in the centre of fine pastoral lands. This factory, which was erected from funds advanced by the Government on loan, is conducted on a co-operative basis. Its output to the end of the year amounted to ten tons of butter, and the estimated output for 1925 is 28 tons.

At Navua, also, a proprietary company has commenced dairying and has acquired a large area of pastoral land already well cleared and roaded.

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SAWMILLING AT NADARIVATU.

The establishment during 1924 of a new sawmilling company at Nadarivatu on the highlands in the interior of Vitilevu was, in view of the cost of imported timbers (£46,620), an important event, and the operations of the Company will be watched with interest. Apart from the possibility of developing an export trade in timber the possibilities of local trade alone should be an encouragement to this Company. An immediate effect of the utilisation of these highlands in connection with sawmilling operations should be an improvement of the means of access to the lands within the Company's sphere of activity, and it is possible that its successful operation may result indirectly in the permanent settlement of Europeans on the interior plateau of Vitilevu.

MINING OPERATIONS.

Prospecting operations have been carried on spasmodically during the past half-century, but no deposits of any metal have as yet been found to occur in payable quantities. Gold, silver and copper are the principal metals sought. Four prospecting licences and 22 miner's rights were issued during the year. No systematic geological or mineralogical survey of the Colony has been made, but the somewhat cursory examinations of the main islands made at different times by visiting scientists have fostered the hope that payable gold may yet be found. Sufficient has been done to demonstrate that there is much of geological interest to be found in the central districts of Vitilevu where the more ancient plutonic and sedimentary rocks are exposed.

PUBLIC HEALTH.

The health of the Colony during 1924 was satisfactory. There were very few cases of dysentery and, apart from a localised epidemic at Nadi, very little typhoid fever. In the later months of the year influenza was prevalent throughout the Colony. It was of a mild type.

Infantile mortality, which is satisfactorily low among other races in the Colony, is still too high among Fijians.

The campaign against ankylostomiasis was continued during the year, and nine-tenths of the population have now received treatment. Marked improvement in general health has resulted. Examination shows that after the second treatment the number cured is 73 per cent. and that the infection remaining is slight.

The Colonial War Memorial Hospital of 113 beds at Suva was completed during the year and has proved a great success.

The Lautoka Hospital of 46 beds for East Indians, serving a population of 35,000, was started during the year and will be completed in 1925.

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Over 5,000 Fijians received salvarsan treatment for yaws.

Fourteen lepers were discharged from Makogai Asylum as all signs of active disease had been absent in each case for over two years.

By the appointment of three more Indian Sanitary Inspectors provision has been completed for some sanitary supervision of the whole population.

VITAL STATISTICS.

The deaths during the year 1924 and the percentage of the respective class of population were as follows:—

Europeans, 42, being 1·47 per cent.

Fijians, 1,989, being 2·40 per cent.

Indians, 325, being ·59 per cent.

Others (excluding Rotumans), 42, being ·65 per cent.

The births were as follows:—

Europeans, 136, being 3·39 per cent.

Fijians, 3,015, being 3·5 per cent.

Indians, 2,280, being 3·48 per cent.

Others (excluding Rotumans), 139, being 2·16 per cent.

Nine hundred and seventy-nine marriages were registered, being at the rate of 0·58 of the population.

CRIME.

The total number of offences dealt with by the Courts was 1,947, as compared with 2,220 for the previous year. Of the more serious crimes, two persons were convicted of murder, six of wounding, ten of sexual offences, and ten of burglary and housebreaking.

NATIVE AFFAIRS.

In the remote districts where little commercial development has taken place there is but slight modification in the old communal methods of native society. In the more commercially progressive areas a slow but definite change towards individualism is evident. Younger natives who have received a certain amount of education have constantly before them the example of a European social system, which leads some to secure exemption from communal obligations and support themselves on their own land without assistance from the community. Many leave their villages for varying periods to become wage-earners in industrial centres or on plantations. On their return to their villages many of these build iron-roofed houses, which, being more permanent than the native thatched house, give the owner more leisure to devote to individual pursuits. In some districts the old native standards are slowly being replaced by a money standard which, whatever its drawbacks, at least tends to fit the native to hold his own in competition with the East Indian and Chinese residents in the Colony. That he is willing to do so is demonstrated by the fact that a certain number of

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natives have engaged in the retail store trade, which until recently has remained exclusively in the hands of Europeans, Chinese and East Indians. Many are now engaged in the sugar mills and a considerable number earn their living as clerks, sailors, carpenters, boat builders, and domestic servants. The vast majority, however, remain agriculturists living in native villages and cultivating their tribal lands.

The chief agricultural products grown by natives are coconuts, bananas, yaqona, pineapples, and native foodstuffs, which consist chiefly of yams, dalo, breadfruit, tapioca, and kumalas, and are used mainly for home consumption. Practically all the bananas exported from the Colony are native grown. Unfortunately, the supply exceeds the demand and a fair proportion of native-grown fruit is unsaleable; unless a new or an improved market can be found the cultivation of bananas by natives will decrease. Coconuts are used to a small extent to make coconut oil, but chiefly for the manufacture of copra. All native copra is sun-dried. Little care is taken in its manufacture, and in consequence its quality often leaves much to be desired. It is usually made in small quantities as occasion demands and sold to the local storekeeper. Although the total production is considerable, the individual plantations are too small to warrant the construction of drying kilns. So long as there is a ready market for this kind of native-made copra there is little hope of much improvement in its quality. The growing of sugar-cane is necessarily restricted to areas within reach of the mills, but the proportion of native-grown cane is increasing. In this industry the natives use more modern methods of cultivation; some of them breeding their own horses and bullocks for that purpose.

The natives engage in fishing operations at irregular intervals and most of the tortoise shell, trocas shell, and bêche-de-mer is obtained by native fishermen. Bêche-de-mer and trocas shell are obtained from the outer coral reefs which are often some miles from the shore. Owing, perhaps, to the high cost of boats and the very small production of native canoes, the industry has not assumed large proportions.

The general health of the natives during the past year was satisfactory. No serious epidemic occurred and the number of cases of dysentery was almost negligible. Progress was maintained in the eradication of tertiary yaws and kindred diseases. The hookworm campaign conducted under the auspices of the Rockefeller Foundation was continued, chiefly by locally-trained native medical practitioners, who treated over 20,000 patients. There is no doubt that its effect is a general improvement in the physical welfare of the natives. The native medical practitioners, who exercise constant supervision over the health of the native in the country districts and some of whom are now in charge of provincial hospitals, treated over 21,000 cases of major and minor ailments during the year. The vaccination of native children

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was continued, over 1,400 being inoculated during the year. Many of the more serious cases were treated in the new Colonial War Memorial Hospital in Suva, which, with its modern equipment and expert staff, is keenly appreciated by the natives.

Considerable progress was made in the improvement of native water supplies, especially in that covering the Rewa Delta, which, by means of over 56 miles of pipe line, now gives an adequate quantity of pure water to 66 villages. The effect of this work is noticed in the complete absence during the year of typhoid fever in this low-lying and swampy but populous area. A pipe supply was also carried to several towns at the mouth of the Sigatoka river, which, owing to the nature of the surrounding country, had previously relied on an uncertain rainfall.

Progress was maintained in improving educational facilities for the natives. A new provincial school was opened at Nadi and the construction of a new joint provincial boarding school for five provinces was well advanced. Manual instruction departments were added to three provincial schools, and selected pupils now receive instruction in carpentry and kindred subjects. Government grants to primary schools under the control of the various missions were increased and five more native schools were admitted to grants in aid. Two boys were selected by competitive examination from Nasinu School for a three years' course of training at Wanganui Technical College, New Zealand, under the system of grants from public funds for that purpose. Two boys completed their training at Wanganui with considerable success and returned to the Colony to take up positions as teachers at Nasinu and Lau Provincial Schools. Much good work was done by the natives themselves in improving their district schools, and there is evidence of a keen interest being taken by the natives in the education of their children. A practical agricultural training establishment for natives is now being conducted by the Methodist Mission.

Much enthusiasm is shown by the natives in all forms of sport. At the invitation of the people of the Kingdom of Tonga, a native Rugby football team visited and played a series of matches against the Tongan team. They were most hospitably received and entertained and the most cordial relations were established and maintained throughout their stay. On their way to Tonga the members of the Fijian team were entertained by the people of Samoa and played a match against a representative team of Samoans. A football cup provided by the generosity of a commercial firm was competed for at Levuka by teams from various Provinces and was won by the Province of Naitasiri. The cup will be competed for annually and will be the means of fostering a sporting spirit among the natives from all parts of the Group.

A team of New Zealand cricketers visited the Colony and played a match against a native team from Bau. They were

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afterwards invited by the Chiefs to visit Bau, where they were entertained and a return match was played.

A considerable number of native boats competed in the annual regatta held at Levuka. A cup presented by the Acting Governor for the winning native-owned cutter was won by the "Totoya" boat, the owners of which retain the cup for one year. The annual competition for this cup will provide a stimulus to the natives in the proper care of their boats and in the art of seamanship in which they are naturally proficient.

At the annual native gymkhana held in the Province of Ra, keen competition took place for a cup presented by the Acting Governor for the best-kept horse.

The enthusiasm shown by natives for all kinds of sport offers a very healthy field for intercourse and friendly rivalry.

The celebration of the Colony's Jubilee of 50 years of British rule, held at Levuka, was attended by large numbers of natives from all parts of the Group. A large tabua (whale's tooth) presented on that occasion has been graciously accepted by His Majesty as a token of the loyalty and affection of his Fijian subjects.

Visits were paid by the Acting Governor to Lau, Taveuni, Nadi, Kadavu, and the Yasawa Group. In each district the Acting Governor received a loyal and enthusiastic welcome from the natives. The people of the Yasawa Group, which had never previously been visited by a Governor, were greatly delighted and keenly enjoyed visiting the Governor's yacht, the modern fittings of which filled them with amazement. The Acting Governor also visited the Leper Asylum at Makogai on Christmas Day and made presents to the inmates, who were deeply grateful to His Excellency.

Ratu Joni Mataitini was appointed during the year to succeed Ratu Pope Seniloli as a member of the Legislative Council.

NATIVE LANDS COMMISSION.

The Native Lands Commission, which operates under Ordinances No. 3 of 1912 and No. 8 of 1919, made reasonable progress with its work during the year 1924, but was somewhat handicapped by the absence of the chief native member of the Commission for the greater part of the year at the British Empire Exhibition, where he acted as Assistant Commissioner at the Fiji Pavilion. The Chairman of the Commission had also to devote a considerable portion of time assisting in editing the Handbook which was published in July to celebrate the Colony's Jubilee.

The native-owned lands of Fiji are held under statute by native Fijians according to their ancient native customs as evidenced by usage and tradition. The Native Lands Commission is instituted for investigating and ascertaining the respec-

tive ownership of all native lands in the Colony, and for their survey and registration. The Commission as at present constituted consists of a European officer, who is Chairman, three native chiefs of high birth and education, and a staff of specially trained native clerks.

The native Fijians are, speaking generally, divided into large tribal divisions, described as *yavusa*, which are respectively bound together by the tradition of common descent and known to the neighbouring tribes under a generic name. These tribes are each divided into landowning units of population, known as *mataqali*, which are further subdivided into smaller family divisions or *tokatoka*. Generally, the *mataqali* is the proprietary unit and the boundaries of their respective lands are as a rule well known to each other.

For the purpose of their enquiries the members of the Commission are vested with the powers of a Stipendiary Magistrate to summon and examine on oath native witnesses who they think are able to give relevant evidence, and to require the attendance of all claimants to any land the title of which is being enquired into, or any person likely to be interested in the title of the land. They are also required, when investigating the ownership of any land, to ascertain and record the name of any person who holds any customary title or office in respect of the land. All evidence is taken by the Commission in the Fijian language. Any native feeling aggrieved at any decision of the Commission has the right to appeal to the Governor in Council, provided that notice of intention to appeal is lodged within 60 days of the announcement of the finding of the Commission. If no notice of appeal is lodged the record of the Commission becomes conclusive and binding.

When ownership has been investigated and recorded by the Native Lands Commission the boundaries of the lands are surveyed by surveyors employed by the Government for this purpose. On the completion of the survey the boundary description and the names of the respective owners are recorded in the registers and deposited, together with copies of the plans, with the Registrar of Titles, who is charged by law with the duty of preserving the Registers with the same care as freehold titles. Copies of the Registers, in the Fijian language, as far as they affect each proprietary unit, are given to each for public use.

The cost of the survey is borne by the respective owners; it is computed in accordance with the scale of charges prepared by the Crown Surveyor and approved by the Governor in Council. If it is proved to the satisfaction of the Governor that any landowning unit is unable to pay for the survey of its lands, he is empowered by law to make such an order as seems to him fit and just under the circumstances.

The provinces in which the investigations of the Commission have been completed are Nadroga, Nadi, Lautoka, Ba, Lomaiviti,

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Tailevu South, Naitasiri, and Rewa East. Portions of Macuata and Cakaudrove have also been investigated. In the province of Bua, Serua, and Tailevu North the tribal frontier boundaries have been laid down, and in the cases of Bua and Serua surveyed, ready for subdivision into mataqali holding.

During the year the Native Lands Commission surveyors surveyed 37,700 acres of mataqali holdings in the provinces of Macuata, Naitasiri, Lomaiviti, and Rewa. The work in the last-named province was difficult and survey operations had to be suspended from time to time on account of the abnormal rainfall.

The following shows the total acreage surveyed in the Colony up to the end of 1924 :—

Mataqali	908,686
Tribal frontier boundaries to be further subdivided into mataqali holding ..	536,404
	<hr/>
Total	1,445,090
	<hr/>

INDIAN AFFAIRS.

The Indian population of the Colony now amounts to 65,000. That population is, for the most part, resident in Suva and the sugar centres of the Colony. It is in the main an agricultural population, though the numbers of Indians who are engaged in commercial pursuits tend to increase annually.

The number of independent Indian cane growers has increased. During the year approximately 2,500 Indian farmers sent cane to the sugar mills. These farmers produced nearly 220,000 tons of cane, of a value of £180,000.

The cane cultivation of the Colony tends to pass more and more into the hands of the Indian cultivator, and the price paid for this commodity ensures a sound economic return for the producer. The guaranteeing of prices by the Colonial Sugar Refining Company for an extended period has given an impetus to cane production.

Rice cultivation is almost totally carried on by the Indian population. The Government rice mill purchased during the year from Indian cultivators 1,159 tons of paddy at a price of £6 10s. to £7 10s. per ton. It was also found possible during the year to distribute among growers from mill profits a bonus of £1 per ton of paddy supplied.

Cotton cultivation is also almost entirely in the hands of the Indian cultivator. During the year, 180 bales of cotton, containing 61,199 lb., were, as already stated, exported to the United Kingdom. This represents an increase of 85 per cent. over the previous year's operations of the industry. Advances on the crop to the amount of £2,694 were made to growers, and on the receipt of account sales it is anticipated that a further large sum will be available.

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During the year £1,604 was also paid to growers in respect of the 1923 crop.

The Indians shared in the gradual improvement in the Colony's position, and the return of economic prosperity had its natural counterpart in an increased contentment of the people.

The visit of the Special Service Squadron was highly appreciated by the Indian population. A loyal address was presented to Vice-Admiral Sir Frederick L. Field, K.C.B., C.M.G., by representative Indians, and the opportunity of visiting the Fleet was gratefully accepted by the Indian community.

There has been considerable evidence during the year under review of a healthy increase in the civic sense of the community. An Indian Reform League has been instituted whose main aims are social. Under the auspices of the League, sports clubs are being founded and the Suva Municipal Council have allotted an area of Albert Park to the League's Cricket club.

The building by Government of the Indian Hospital at Lautoka marks a further advance in the general improvement of Indian conditions.

The Missions are devoting more and more attention to schemes of social amelioration, with the consequent reaction on the general life of the community. The demand for increased educational facilities is insistent and the general desire for improvement is apparent.

The s.s. "Sutlej," which was chartered to convey Indian repatriates, arrived in the Colony in December, bringing 125 passengers and 370 tons of general cargo from India. The vessel left Fiji on the 20th December for Calcutta with 1,022 souls on board. The repatriates took away from the Colony remittances to the amount of £20,221, and they carried with them jewellery of the declared value of £2,607.

The birth-rate has increased to 3.48 per cent., while the death-rate decreased to 0.59 per cent. Compared with the statistics of the other sections of the community, these figures are remarkable and are indicative of the general health of the Indian community.

Education.

The progress of education in Fiji has been closely associated with the Colony's administrative history, but prior to the date of Cession the two Missions had already made considerable progress. The Methodist Mission started in 1835 and the Catholic Mission in 1844, and the first necessity was to reduce the spoken dialects to a common written form. Hazlewood's dictionary was written in 1850, and in 1853 the New Testament was published in Fijian. Mission schools for Fijians were opened up in every

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district as soon as teachers were available. It is interesting to note that as far back as 1880 an Ordinance was passed for industrial schools for natives, and that under this Ordinance successful schools were conducted at Yanawai and Naikorokoro.

In 1890 the number of Europeans in the Colony necessitated the opening of public schools for Europeans at Levuka and Suva. These schools were under the management of local School Boards. About this time, also, the Catholic Mission began schools in Suva for their European adherents.

The year 1916 worked a complete change in education. In that year the School Boards were abolished and the Board of Education was created. An Education Department was formed and Ordinances were passed to allow grants to be paid to primary and vernacular schools, and a registration Ordinance made compulsory the registration of all schools and teachers.

For the Fijian natives, Government schools at Nasinu and in several provinces have been opened so that boys from the Mission village schools may enter these Government schools in order to proceed through the elementary school grades and qualify for native official appointments or become native assistants in one or other of the numerous trades open to them. Several natives have been granted further education abroad with excellent results. At the present time it is felt that, while reasonably satisfactory facilities exist for primary education for Fijians, insufficient attention has perhaps been given to vocational education for Fijian youths after leaving the primary grades, and more attention will be given in the near future to industrial and agricultural instruction for senior pupils.

European education in the Colony has made considerable progress during the last few years. In order to ensure complete staffs for the three Government schools for European children, a scheme of co-operation with the Education Department of New Zealand has been made. By this means the teachers, who are all trained and certificated under one system, continue to use the New Zealand courses of instruction with suitable modifications for local candidates in Fiji. In addition, these teachers are visited and inspected annually by a New Zealand Inspector of Schools. Correspondence classes for children in country districts were commenced in 1924, and have already given good results, and, in brief, it may be stated that in proportion to the total number of European children of school age in the Colony (611 in 1921), the educational facilities both for town and country children are reasonably extensive, and the boarding fees are extremely low.

The complexity of the education problem in Fiji is increased by the numerous races now domiciled in the Islands. Fifty years ago, when the Government and the Missions were dealing with problems of Fijian or European education, there were no

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East Indians in the Colony. At present there are about 65,000 Indians resident in Fiji, and considerable attention has been given to their education.

In 1924 the expenditure on education was £27,103, as compared with £25,322 in 1923, £28,956 in 1922, £26,151 in 1921, £19,990 in 1920, and £14,185 in 1919.

The two schools established in 1917 in Suva had a roll of 206 in December, 1924 (Boys' Grammar School, 85; Girls' Grammar School, with mixed kindergarten, 121). There were 49 children from the country boarded in the Grammar Schools and Levuka Public School.

On the 31st December, 1924, there were 27 schools receiving grants-in-aid under the Primary Schools Regulations, and 25 under the Vernacular Schools Regulations. Of the latter, 19 are for Fijians and 6 for Indians.

It has not yet been possible to establish any Government-assisted training colleges, but the Davuilevu Institute of the Methodist Mission qualified for the pass grant under the supplementary regulations in connection with training schools in respect of eleven students who passed the teachers' qualifying examination. Two of the four Fijian students at Wanganui Technical College returned at the end of 1924, and two others will be sent early in 1925.

There were 20 passes out of the 43 candidates for the Cambridge Local Examinations in 1921, 17 passes out of 36 candidates in 1922, 34 passes out of 59 candidates in December, 1923, and 22 passes out of 31 candidates in 1924.

An Ordinance to make compulsory the registration of schools and teachers in the Colony was passed in 1918. Six hundred and six schools and 1,156 teachers have been registered up to the 31st December, 1924.

The native provinces have subscribed largely towards the cost of establishing four joint provincial schools for Fijian boys. It is intended that each school will board 60 to 70 pupils. Difficulties of obtaining suitable sites and building materials and of staffing have delayed the scheme. One of the four schools was opened in September, 1921, the second was built in 1922 and opened in January, 1923, and a third was opened in October, 1923.

There are now altogether 62 Government and assisted schools, 22 being for Indians, 31 for Fijians, 1 receiving both Indians and Fijians, and 8 for Europeans, other races and half-castes. They have 4,786 pupils, of whom 1,677 are Indians, 2,666 are Fijians, and 473 are Europeans, other races and half-castes. The staff consists of 59 European, 72 Fijian, and 45 Indian teachers. There are village schools in the great majority of native villages. These are supervised by native teachers, and instruction is given in the vernacular.

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Finance.

The revenue for the year amounted to £484,834, or £4,852 more than the revenue for 1923.

Additional taxation in the form of a Residential Tax was imposed during the year and produced approximately £21,900.

The export duty on copra which was abolished during 1923 was reimposed from the beginning of 1924, but revenue from this source is earmarked for a specific service: the conducting of an intensive campaign against a plant disease which threatened to destroy the copra industry in the Colony.

The expenditure for the year was £451,070, or £21,404 more than the expenditure for 1923.

A comparison between the two years, 1923 and 1924, is as follows:—

<i>Year.</i>	<i>Revenue.</i>	<i>Expenditure.</i>	<i>Surplus.</i>
	£	£	£
1923 ..	479,982	429,666	50,316
1924 ..	484,834	451,070	33,764

The Loan Debt of the Colony may be stated as follows:—

Public Works Loan	150,000	} Short-term loans, advances and overdrafts for public works, etc., pending the raising of a long-term loan.
Returned Soldiers and Sailors Advances Loan.	11,200	
Advances by Imperial Treasury and Crown Agents.	553,185	
Local Overdrafts	968	
	£715,353	

The Legislature approved of the raising by means of a loan of an additional £100,000 for public works.

The currency in circulation consists of Government notes and English coins of pre-war fineness. The position of the Currency Note Guarantee Fund is satisfactory, as will be seen from the following:—

Liabilities:—	£
Notes in circulation	318,397
Assets:—	
Gold Reserve (sovereigns)	72,896
Securities (market price at 31st Decem- ber, 1924).	290,049
Depreciation Fund Investments ..	14,577
	£377,522
Surplus on Values at 31st December, 1924	£59,125

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The transactions of the Currency Commissioners for 1924 produced a net surplus of £10,269, as follows :—

	£	£
Interest on Securities and Discount on Remittances.		14,649
Expenses	1,850	
Statutory Provision for De- preciation Fund. ..	2,530	4,380
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Surplus		£10,269
		<hr/>

Banks and Banking Facilities.

Two private banks are operating in the Colony—the Bank of New South Wales, with three establishments, and the Bank of New Zealand, with two. The paid-up capital of the former is £6,000,000, while that of the latter is £5,029,988. The amount of deposits held by the Bank of New South Wales is £461,656, and by the Bank of New Zealand £285,007.

In addition, there is a Government Savings Bank, in which, during the year under review, the number of accounts increased from 2,604 to 3,238, while the amount of deposits made during the year increased from £64,216 to £73,292. The total amount of deposits at the end of the year was £9,479 in excess of the amount on deposit at 31st December, 1923.

The amount at credit of depositors on 31st December, 1924, was £90,711, as against which were held :—

	£	£
Securities (market price on 31st December, 1924).	93,266	
Cash awaiting investment ..	2,950	
	<hr/>	96,216
Surplus		£5,505
		<hr/>

The transactions of the Savings Bank for the year 1924 were as follows :—

	£	£
Interest on Investment ..		4,189
Interest credited to Depositors	2,716	
Expenses	167	
	<hr/>	2,883
Surplus		£1,306
		<hr/>

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The rate of interest paid to depositors is $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. up to £500, and $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on deposits exceeding £500 up to a maximum of £1,000.

Trade, Agriculture and Industry.

IMPORTS AND EXPORTS.

The total imports and exports of the past two years, excluding transshipment goods, are shown in the following table :—

Year.	Imports.		Exports.		Total Trade.	
	£		£		£	
1923 ..	989,060		1,553,239		2,542,299	
1924 ..	1,066,594		1,498,934		2,565,528	

There is a preferential tariff in favour of the products and manufactures of the British Empire.

With a few exceptions, foreign goods subject to *ad valorem* rates pay $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. higher rate of duty than British goods of the same description and those liable to specific rates of duty 100 per cent. higher.

The balance of trade of the Colony still remains satisfactory.

Of the total trade of the Colony during 1924, 63·31 per cent. was with British Possessions, chiefly Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, and 11·32 per cent. with the United Kingdom. The balance of the total trade, i.e. 25·37 per cent., was chiefly with Europe and the United States of America. The total trade of the Colony with the United Kingdom fell from 13·30 per cent. in 1923 to 11·32 per cent. in 1924. That with British Possessions fell from 65·60 per cent. in 1923 to 63·31 per cent. in 1924, and that with foreign countries increased from 21·00 per cent. in 1923 to 25·37 per cent. in 1924. The increase of trade with foreign countries is accounted for by the fact that approximately 95 per cent. of the copra exported from the Colony went direct to foreign countries, principally Europe.

The principal items of export continue to be sugar, copra and bananas, the quantities and values of these products exported during each of the last two years being as follows :—

Year.	Sugar.		Copra.		Bananas.	
	Tons.	Value. £	Tons.	Value. £	Bunches.	Value. £
1924 ...	44,472	768,110	23,137	484,496	467,845	115,246
1923 ...	44,108	866,287	24,161	443,445	406,607	94,325

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Other principal domestic exports were as follows :—

Article.	1924.		1923.	
	Quantity.	Value.	Quantity.	Value.
		£		£
Coconuts No.	311,442	1,613	270,230	1,119
Bêche-de-mer ... Cwt.	459	1,896	428	1,844
Trocas Shell ... Tons	584	21,565	439	12,430
Rubber Cwt.	1,429	7,416	801	5,128
Molasses Tons	4,783	4,783	8,392	8,392

AGRICULTURE AND INDUSTRIES.

Sugar.

The quantity of sugar exported during 1924 was 44,472 tons, valued at £768,110, an increase of 364 tons exported as compared with the previous year. The Penang Sugar Company has again commenced planting operations, and, with a greater area under sugar-cane in the districts in which the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, Limited, operates, the quantity exported should show a marked increase in the near future.

Bananas.

The export of bananas during the year amounted to 467,845 bunches, valued at £115,246, as compared with 406,607 bunches exported in 1923, an increase of 61,238 bunches. The export of bananas has shown a gradual increase over the last three years, but a substantial increase cannot be expected unless additional markets are found. New Zealand is now practically the only country to which this fruit is exported, and although small shipments have been made to Australia it is feared that the heavy duty imposed in that country will prevent the resumption of trade to any extent.

Coconut Industry.

The quantity of copra exported during the year was 23,137 tons, a decrease of 1,024 tons exported as compared with the previous year. The destructive coconut leaf moth, *Levuana iridescens*, has not spread beyond the island of Ovalau, and the principal coconut areas are free of infection. The Government is taking energetic steps to combat this pest and it is anticipated that efficient natural enemies will shortly be obtained.

Rice.

The operations of the Government rice mill were continued during the year. The rice industry is referred to elsewhere in this report.

Trocas Shell.

The quantity of this shell exported was 584 tons, valued at £21,565. The principal market of trocas shell is in Japan, where the shell is made into buttons, which closely resemble mother-of-pearl.

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Pineapples.

The export of fresh pineapples amounted to 4,768 cases, valued at £1,408. The Government is at present considering a proposal to undertake, in conjunction with the Dominion Cannery, Limited, of Canada, the cultivation and canning of pineapples for export. The final details are now being considered and it is anticipated that planting will commence early in 1925.

Rubber.

The export of rubber increased from 89,753 lb., valued at £5,128, for 1923 to 159,995 lb., valued at £7,416, for the year under review.

Cotton.

The quantity of cotton prepared for export for the 1924 season was 180 bales, containing 61,199 lb., as compared with 33,072 lb. exported for the previous season. The cotton industry is referred to elsewhere in this report.

Biscuits.

The biscuit factory, erected in 1922, exported 334,365 lb. of biscuits, valued at £7,788, to neighbouring islands during the year.

Miscellaneous Exports.

The following products were exported during the year, in addition to the above:—Molasses, 4,783 tons, valued at £4,783; bêche-de-mer, 23 tons, valued at £1,896; hides, 3,844, valued at £2,941; turtle shell, 1,446 lb., valued at £1,313; oil, coconut, 74 tons, valued at £2,977.

Timber.

Many valuable timbers are found in Fiji. At present, however, the export of timber is limited, due mainly to the difficulties of internal transport. Several small mills provide sufficient timber for local use and for the manufacture of the cases in which bananas are exported. A company has recently been formed and the necessary plant erected to deal with a large area under timber in Colo North.

Cattle.

Cattle thrive well in all parts of Fiji. There are no serious endemic diseases affecting cattle, nor are there any infected ticks. Every precaution is taken by inspection and treatment of animals, both at the port of embarkation and at the port of arrival in the Colony, to guard against the introduction of diseases and pests from outside sources. A cattle dip is in course of construction at Suva, and all cattle from tick-infested countries will, in future, be required to be dipped prior to release from quarantine. "Stores" can best be raised in the dry zones,

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whereas the luxuriant state of the wetter zones is more suited for fattening purposes. Large areas of land suitable for raising cattle are available for leasing. The erection by a company of a meat-canning plant is at present being considered.

Dairying.

The dairy scheme for returned sailors and soldiers has proved that excellent butter can be produced in Fiji and considerable quantities are now placed on the local market. Samples of Fiji butter have been examined by dairying experts, who have pronounced it to be of first-class quality. Special reference to the development of the dairy industry has already been made.

LAND.

Prior to the British occupation of Fiji, European settlers had acquired large areas of land from the native chiefs, and, after the Deed of Cession, Crown Grants for land on claims substantiated before the Lands Commission were issued. In this manner, 414,615 acres were alienated.

By the year 1912 Crown Grants for a further area of 20,184 acres of land purchased from the natives had been issued, but in this year, by Ordinance No. III, the sale of native lands, except to the Government for specific purposes, was prohibited.

The standard tenure is leasehold up to 99 years, with re-assessment of the rental every twenty-fifth year in building leases, and every thirty-third year in agricultural leases. To afford greater security to the tenant, the Government passed Ordinance No. 23 of 1916, which provides that, on refusal by the native owners to renew a lease (without just cause) the owner shall pay the value of the permanent and unexhausted improvements on the land, failing payment of which the Governor-in-Council may issue a lease renewal on re-assessed rental.

Leases of Crown lands are submitted generally to public auction, usually at an upset premium of £2 to cover cost of advertising the auction sale. Leases of small areas applied for by East Indians are exempt from sale by public auction. The lessee is called upon to arrange for the survey of the land in order that the lease may issue, but he may forthwith enter into occupation of the land.

The rent of land in Fiji varies according to situation and quality. Pasturable lands vary from 1*d.* to 2*s.* per acre, coconut lands from 6*d.* to 5*s.*, hill land from 6*d.* to 2*s.*, banana, sugarcane, rice and maize land from 5*s.* to £1, the latter rental prevailing only in certain favoured localities in which supply and demand have resulted in that high rent.

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The following statement shows the position as regards land alienated at the end of the year 1924 :—

Nature of Title.	No. of Titles.	Area.	In process of Alienation.		Total Area.
			No. of Lots and Area Estimated.		
			No.	Acres.	
Freehold	1,573	528,106	1	1	528,107
Leases of Crown Land ..	197	17,284	119	4,776	22,060
Leases of Native Land ..	5,852	345,063	1,764	25,971	371,034
					<u>921,201</u>

The total area of the Colony is 4,523,620 acres.

Climate.

The meteorological observations for 1924 show that the total rainfall recorded at Suva during the year was 168·80 inches, as against 109·33 inches in 1923 and 158·10 inches in 1922. This rainfall is 50·90 inches above the average. Rain fell on 250 days.

The greatest rainfall on any one day throughout the year was 9·12 inches on the 25th August.

Station.	Total for 1924. inches.	Average Annual Rainfall to end of 1924 (in inches).
Narovurovu, Ba ..	88·75	103·85
Rarawai, Ba	94·54	81·62
Waininu, Bua	168·02	149·28
Buca Bay	90·00	95·72
Rabi	114·34	147·13
Savu Savu Bay ..	132·42	103·92
Vuna, Taveuni ..	159·14	133·88
Waiyevo, Taveuni ..	119·47	101·18
Vunidawa, Colo East ..	162·21	140·63
Nadarivatu, Colo North	147·67	129·63
Tavua, Colo North ..	90·26	71·89
Munia, Lau	66·04	69·69
Lautoka, C.S.R. Co. ..	78·24	68·95
Levuka	127·68	92·19
Makogai	93·22	81·63
Labasa, Colonial Sugar Refining Co.	95·93	98·32
Nadi	67·54	64·20
Lawaqa, Nadroga ..	64·71	70·25
Suva	168·80	117·90
Navua	177·13	138·23
Nausori	148·95	114·47
Rotuma	155·74	135·82

The mean shade temperatures at Suva for the year were 71·3° F. minimum, 82·4° F. maximum. The average temperature for the year was 76·8° F. The highest temperature recorded was 93·2° F. on the 18th March, and the lowest was 62·1° F. on the 17th July. The hottest month was December, with an

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average temperature of 87·9° F. maximum and 71·6° F. minimum, and the coolest month was September, with an average of 77·7° F. maximum and 68·7° F. minimum.

Communications.

SHIPPING.

The nationalities of vessels visiting the Colony are shown in the following table :—

<i>Nationality.</i>	1924.		1923.	
	<i>No.</i>	<i>Tons.</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Tons.</i>
British	111	352,407	120	359,849
American	10	27,534	5	6,353
Swedish	—	—	—	—
Norwegian	7	23,642	5	19,340
French	1	3,420	1	4,427
Total	129	407,003	131	389,969

The number and tonnage of local vessels holding coasting licences were :—

<i>Nationality.</i>	1924.		1923.	
	<i>No.</i>	<i>Tons.</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Tons.</i>
European-owned vessels ..	71	2,424	75	2,682
Native-owned vessels ..	55	601	67	687
Other vessels.. .. .	24	230	23	212
Total	150	3,255	165	3,581

Regular steamer communication with Fiji is as follows :—

To and from Sydney, via Auckland, Canadian-Australasian Royal Mail Line of steamers, four-weekly.

To and from Sydney, A.U.S.N. Company's passenger steamer, four-weekly.

From Sydney, Union Steamship Company of New Zealand, cargo steamer, four-weekly.

To and from Vancouver, via Honolulu, Canadian-Australasian Royal Mail Line, four-weekly.

From the United Kingdom, the New Zealand Shipping Company's cargo steamers, quarterly.

To the United Kingdom, Clan Line of cargo steamers, two-monthly.

ROADS.

The total length of metalled roads in the Colony is less than 100 miles, but with gravelled roads and certain unmetalled roads in the dry zone the total length of roads capable of being used by motor traffic in fine weather is about 230 miles. Of this length about 110 miles is unsuitable for motor traffic during the wet season.

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Bridle tracks linking up native villages and isolated estates are interlaced across the principal islands.

Roads that have been proclaimed as public roads as prescribed by Ordinance 21 of 1914 are maintained at the expense of the general revenue. Bridle tracks connecting native villages are weeded and kept generally in fair order communally in accordance with arrangements included annually in programmes of work drawn up in pursuance of resolutions adopted in native provincial councils.

A sum of £29,365 was spent on the maintenance of roads and bridges during the year, and £9,018 on improvement works.

The first section of the Main Trunk Road, which ends at the village of Sawani and known as Princes Road, was completed and opened to traffic on the 15th October, 1924. The new work which is about 8 miles in length, cost £24,995 and, linking with the Sawani-Davuilevu and Davuilevu-Suva roads, affords a circular motor drive of 28 miles. A considerable amount of settlement by Indians is taking place along the new section and plantations of bananas, pineapples, yaqona, etc., are rapidly replacing the bush.

The continuation of the Main Trunk Road beyond the Waimanu River has been postponed for the present.

RIVERS.

There are only three rivers which are navigable for any distance except by small or native craft. The most important is the Rewa River, which forms the main channel of communication between Suva and the interior of Vitilevu. This river is kept free of obstacles by the Rewa River Board, which is composed of official and unofficial members appointed by the Government, and is navigable for a distance of 50 miles for light draught launches.

For some years past the eradication of water hyacinth in the main rivers, and more particularly the Rewa River, has involved some expense to the Government. Its rapid spread tending to choke streams used more particularly by natives, necessitated its being declared a noxious weed, and, under the provisions of Ordinance No. 10 of 1919, the Governor-in-Council prescribed the steps to be taken by occupiers of land throughout the Colony for the eradication of the pest.

RAILWAYS.

There are no Government railways in the Colony, but the Colonial Sugar Refining Company have a narrow gauge railway extending from Tavua to Sigatoka, a distance of approximately 120 miles, over which, free of charge, passengers are carried on specified days.

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POSTAL, TELEGRAPH AND TELEPHONE SERVICE.

Steamers of the following lines, namely, the Canadian-Australasian Royal Mail Line, the Union Steamship Company of New Zealand, Limited, the Australasian United Steam Navigation Company, Limited, convey mails regularly between Fiji, Canada, Honolulu, Australia, New Zealand and England. Inter-island communication is carried on by the Government steamer, *Pioneer*, several other small steamers owned by the Fiji Shipping Company, and a considerable number of auxiliary vessels and cutters.

A mail subsidy, at the rate of £5,000 per annum, is paid to the Canadian-Australasian Royal Mail Line, a condition of the contract being that the vessels remain in port for six hours' daylight after arrival at Suva. A subsidy, at the rate of £1,800 per annum, is paid to the Fiji Shipping Company, Limited, in respect of a steamer service between Suva and Labasa via coastal ports.

The towns of Suva and Levuka, situated 54 miles apart and on different islands, are connected by a telegraphic and telephonic system, of which 11½ miles is by submarine cable. The main island of Vitilevu is intersected by an overhead telephone line which passes through Nausori, Vunidawa, Nadarivatu and Ba, and terminates at Suva and Lautoka. The total distance covered by this line amounts to 125 miles. Of this line, the section between Suva and Ba is the joint property of the Government, the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, and the Union Steamship Company of New Zealand. The Government interest in the line terminates at Ba, though, by arrangement, hours have been allotted to the public for the use of this section. The Colonial Sugar Refining Company have also extended their private line from Lautoka to Sigatoka.

Government telephone services are established in the towns of Suva and Levuka, and in the districts of Nausori, Navua, and Taveuni. In addition, the Colonial Sugar Refining Company has established private services at Ba, Lautoka, Nadi, and Sigatoka, which connect with the main overland line in Suva, and at Labasa, in Vanualevu, which connects with the wireless station.

At the principal settlements in the islands outside Vitilevu, viz., Labasa, Taveuni, and Savusavu, which are not otherwise in communication with the capital, wireless stations have been established under Government control.

Direct cable communication exists between Fiji and Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, through the Pacific Cable Board, whose office is situated in Suva.

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Legislation.

During the year, nineteen Ordinances were passed. The majority of the new laws consolidated existing legislation and were passed with a view to expediting the revision of the laws of the Colony.

Among the Ordinances enacted during the year, mention may be made of the following :—

No. 1 transferred the administration of Indian estates from the Agent-General of Immigration to the Curator. It also granted powers of summary administration of small estates to the Curator.

No. 5 transferred the administration of the Arms Ordinance to the Police.

No. 12 provided for the registration of Imperial Letters Patent in the Colony.

D. R. STEWART,
Acting Colonial Secretary.

17th April, 1925.

COLONIAL REPORTS, Etc.

The following recent reports, etc., relating to His Majesty's Colonial Possessions have been issued, and may be obtained from the sources indicated on the title page:—

ANNUAL.			
No.	Colony, etc.		Year.
1229	Northern Territories of the Gold Coast	.. .. .	1923-1924
1230	Colonial Survey Committee Report	.. .. .	1914-1923
1231	Cayman Islands	.. .. .	1923
1232	Leeward Islands	.. .. .	1923-1924
1233	Federated Malay States	.. .. .	1923
1234	Mauritius	.. .. .	"
1235	Straits Settlements	.. .. .	"
1236	Seychelles	.. .. .	"
1237	Tongan Islands Protectorate	.. .. .	1923-1924
1238	State of Brunei	.. .. .	1923
1239	Unfederated Malay States	.. .. .	"
1240	St. Lucia	.. .. .	"
1241	Bahamas	.. .. .	1924
1242	Falkland Islands	.. .. .	1923
1243	Ceylon	.. .. .	"
1244	Basutoland	.. .. .	1924
1245	Nigeria	.. .. .	"
1246	Gilbert and Ellice Islands	.. .. .	1923-1924
1247	Bermuda	.. .. .	1923
1248	Weihaiwei	.. .. .	1924
1249	Gambia	.. .. .	"
1250	State of Brunei	.. .. .	"
1251	St. Helena	.. .. .	"
1252	Ashanti	.. .. .	1923-1924
1253	Cyprus	.. .. .	1924
1254	Zanzibar	.. .. .	"
1255	Gold Coast	.. .. .	1923-1924
1256	Federated Malay States	.. .. .	1924
1257	Nyasaland	.. .. .	"
1258	Turks and Caicos Islands	.. .. .	"

MISCELLANEOUS.

No.	Colony, etc.		Subject.
83	Southern Nigeria	.. .. .	Mineral Survey, 1910.
84	West Indies	.. .. .	Preservation of Ancient Monuments, etc.
85	Southern Nigeria	.. .. .	Mineral Survey, 1911.
86	Southern Nigeria	.. .. .	Mineral Survey, 1912.
87	Ceylon	.. .. .	Mineral Survey.
88	Imperial Institute	.. .. .	Oil-seeds, Oils, etc.
89	Southern Nigeria	.. .. .	Mineral Survey, 1913.
90	St. Vincent	.. .. .	Roads and Land Settlement.
91	East Africa Protectorate	.. .. .	Geology and Geography of the northern part of the Protectorate.
92	Colonies—General	.. .. .	Fishes of the Colonies.
93	Pitcairn Island	.. .. .	Report on a visit to the Island by the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific.