

## NAURU AND OCEAN ISLANDS PHOSPHATE.

REPORT OF A. F. ELLIS, C.M.G., NEW ZEALAND COMMISSIONER, BRITISH PHOSPHATE COMMISSION.

PARTICULARS are supplied herewith regarding the tenth year of operations at Nauru and Ocean Islands since the phosphate business came under Government ownership. The year ended at 30th June. Shipments as compared with the two previous years are as follows:—

	Eighth Year (1927-28). Tons.	Ninth Year (1928-29). Tons.	Tenth Year (1929-30). Tons.
Nauru .. .. .	310,990	342,770	296,310
Ocean .. .. .	190,925	233,820	207,863
	<u>501,915</u>	<u>576,590</u>	<u>504,173</u>

In each case bill-of-lading figures are taken. It will be noted that there is a decrease of 72,417 tons on the previous year. As compared with the other nine years of operations, the shipments for the tenth year come third, having been exceeded on the seventh (593,340 tons) and ninth (576,590 tons).

The cause of the decreased shipments for the tenth year was the severity of the weather experienced during the westerly monsoon season, which was considerably worse than usual, with the result that three out of the four sets of deep-sea moorings at the two islands were carried away. Re-laying these moorings was a difficult and expensive operation. As an instance of the effect of these adverse conditions on shipping operations, it may be noted that the best month for the year was August, 1929 (59,121 tons), and the worst month January, 1930 (14,672 tons).

Labour and health conditions at both islands for the year under review were practically normal, except that an epidemic of influenza at Ocean Island occasioned a good deal of delay.

Importations of phosphate to the Dominion as compared with the two previous years are as follows:—

	Eighth Year. Tons.	Ninth Year. Tons.	Tenth Year. Tons.
Nauru/Ocean .. .. .	136,718	138,053	117,826
Outside .. .. .	42,946	29,288	49,983
	<u>179,664</u>	<u>167,341</u>	<u>167,809</u>

The above quantity of outside phosphate brought in by the Commission for the fertilizer-manufacturers was from Morocco and Makatea Island. In practice, the manufacturers use Nauru/Ocean and Makatea almost entirely for superphosphate-production, and Morocco is finely ground at the various mills in the Dominion for use in the raw state.

Regarding the proportion of the Nauru/Ocean output which comes to the Dominion, the figures as compared with the two previous years are as follows: Eighth year, 24.76 per cent.; ninth year, 24.66 per cent.; tenth year, 25.21 per cent.

Following is a detailed statement of shipments from Nauru and Ocean Islands for the past year:—

	Totals.		Australia.		New Zealand.		
	Tons.	Percent- age.	Tons.	Percent- age.	Tons.	Percent- age.	
<i>Nauru.</i>							
July-December, 1929 .. .. .	148,860	100	104,460	70.17	44,400	29.83	
January-June, 1930 .. .. .	147,450	100	116,610	79.08	30,840	20.92	
1929-30 .. .. .	<u>296,310</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>221,070</u>	<u>74.61</u>	<u>75,240</u>	<u>25.39</u>	
<i>Ocean.</i>							
July-December, 1929 .. .. .	117,007	100	88,447	75.59	28,560	24.41	
January-June, 1930 .. .. .	90,856	100	67,556	74.36	23,300	25.64	
1929-30 .. .. .	<u>207,863</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>156,003</u>	<u>75.05</u>	<u>51,860</u>	<u>24.95</u>	
<i>Nauru and Ocean Islands.</i>							
July-December, 1929 .. .. .	265,867	100	192,907	72.56	72,960	27.44	
January-June, 1930 .. .. .	238,306	100	184,166	77.28	54,140	22.72	
1929-30 .. .. .	<u>504,173</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>377,073</u>	<u>74.79</u>	<u>127,100</u>	<u>25.21</u>	

NOTE.—No shipments were made to other countries during the year.

Constructional developments at the islands which may be noted are as follows: (1) Completion of a steel cantilever-type jetty at Ocean Island, with band conveyer delivering phosphate to the outer end. This plant is giving very satisfactory service. (2) The cantilever at Nauru for mechanical loading will, it is anticipated, be ready for preliminary trials in October. (3) A new steamer is under construction for the Commission, to be fitted with special appliances for laying or lifting the deep-sea moorings which constitute such an important part of the operations. The vessel's cargo-carrying capacity will be 6,500 tons. She is being built by Messrs. Harland and Wolff, Ltd., at Govan, and should be completed by the end of March next.