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INFORMATION FROM NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES:
SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF INFORMATION TRANSMITTED
UNDER ARTICLE 73 e OF THE CHARTER. REPORT OF
THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

Pacific Territories

NIUE ISLAND ^{1/}

^{1/} In accordance with General Assembly resolution 1332 (XIII) this summary is also submitted to the Committee on Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories.

NOTE: The following symbols are used:

Three dots (...)		information not available
Dash (-)		information negligible or non-existent
Slash	1948/1949	crop or financial year
Hyphen	1948-1949	annual average

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Niue is an isolated island 300 miles to the east of the Tongan Group and some 1,600 miles north-east of New Zealand. It is approximately thirteen miles long and eleven miles wide and has an area of about 100 square miles.

It consists of upheaved coral rock; the soil is fertile but not plentiful and is scattered in small pockets amongst the rocks. The broken terrain makes cultivation difficult and prevents the grazing of stock. There are no rivers. Certain parts of the island are heavily wooded, and coconut and pandanus palms are found in many areas. Fish are not abundant. There are no other natural resources. The climate is mild and equable. Severe hurricanes are rare.

The people are of Polynesian stock and their language is a Polynesian dialect related to Tongan and Samoan. In everyday life, English is seldom used. The present generation, however, is becoming bilingual.

In 1894, the population was estimated to have been 5,070; it reached its lowest point in 1928, when it was 3,747. A census was taken in September 1945, giving a population of 4,231 Niueans and twenty-two Europeans.

	<u>Population</u>			
	<u>1947</u> (March estimate)	<u>1953</u> (March estimate)	<u>1956</u> (Sept. census)	<u>1957</u> (Dec. estimate)
Niueans	4,303	4,576	4,650	4,678
Europeans	<u>25</u>	<u>37</u>	<u>57</u>	<u>57</u>
Total	4,328	4,613	4,707	4,735

A factor to be considered in the evaluation of population figures is the number of Niueans who emigrate to New Zealand; during the period 1950 to 1957 ^{2/} over 900 left the island.

	<u>Vital Statistics</u>		
	<u>1947</u>	<u>1953</u> (cal.)	<u>1957</u> (cal.)
Birth-rate per 1,000 population	38.3	41.2	50.9
Death-rate per 1,000 population	25.4	12.9	9.5
Infant mortality, rate per 1,000 live births	253.0	56.7	50.0

^{2/} The years mentioned in this report relate to the administrative year of 1 April to 31 March. Where a year is mentioned without qualifications, it refers to the twelve months starting 1 April of the year specified. /...

GOVERNMENT

Niue became a British protectorate in April 1900. British sovereignty over the island was proclaimed in October of the same year, and it was annexed to New Zealand in June 1901.

The Territory is constitutionally included in the Cook Islands but has a separate administration. A constitution for Niue was provided by the Cook Islands Act of 1915. The inhabitants are British subjects and New Zealand citizens.

A Resident Commissioner carries out the executive functions of Government. Laws are made by Act of the New Zealand Parliament, by regulations issued thereunder or by local ordinance. Ordinances are passed by the Island Council, a co-legislative body, which consists of thirteen Niueans and the Resident Commissioner, who is President. The members are appointed by the Governor-General of New Zealand; in practice, each village nominates one member to the Council, except the principal village, Alofi, which has two representatives.

Island Council ordinances require the assent of the Resident Commissioner or the Governor-General of New Zealand. The Council has the power to legislate for peace, order and good government. It has no power to borrow money, to impose customs duties, to establish courts of justice, to provide for the imposition of fines exceeding NZ\$50, or to order terms of imprisonment exceeding three months. Its authority to approve expenditure is limited to revenues raised by ordinance.

The sections of the Cook Islands Amendment Act 1957, passed on 25 October 1957 applicable to Niue, increase the membership of the Island Council to sixteen members and change its name to Niue Island Assembly. This body will have a larger measure of control over locally raised revenue. The Act, which was intended to come into force in 1958, also provides for the appointment by the Resident Commissioner of village committees with limited police and judicial authority. Thus far, there is no system of local village government. Village affairs are usually discussed in regular meetings of the heads of families, and otherwise are mainly in the hands of the councillor, the pastor and the village constable, who functions also as liaison with the Administration.

The Cook Islands Act 1915 established a High Court and a Native Land Court. The Resident Commissioner acts as judge of both courts. Appeals go to the Supreme Court of New Zealand. The Native Lands Court investigates titles to land, makes

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orders as to ownership and controls land transactions. No system of title registration has yet been evolved. The nature of customary ownership and family genealogies in each village are being examined to arrive at a workable system of registration.

It is government policy to fill vacancies in the administrative services with Niueans, wherever possible. At the end of 1957, the number of regular employees was 176 Niueans (129 in 1952) and twenty-three Europeans, of whom nine were heads of departments (seventeen Europeans in 1952).

The Territory was represented by a Niuean member on the Cook Island delegation at the three South Pacific conferences of island peoples organized by the South Pacific Commission in 1950, 1953 and 1956.

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

The economy is based solely on agriculture. The possibilities for development and for an improvement in the living standard of the people are limited by the island's isolated position and the meagreness of its natural resources. Foodstuffs, such as taro (the staple diet), yams, kumaras (sweet potato), bananas and tapioca, are grown for home consumption. Copra, bananas and kumaras are exported. The rise in the prices of copra and bananas have stimulated export production and made the past decade a period of relative prosperity.

On the basis of the findings of a soil survey conducted in 1949, a crop development officer was appointed in 1951 to encourage more diversified and higher production. This was followed in 1954 by the formation of a Department of Agriculture and the appointment of an Agricultural Officer as head of the Department. A second Agricultural Officer was appointed in 1957. An agricultural programme, initiated in 1954, covers the following main points: improved methods of agriculture and instruction in better agricultural techniques in schools and villages; the selection of highly productive food and cash crops; experimental work in pastures and crops; and pest control. This programme has had, in many instances, the co-operation of the local population.

The soil survey was made in 1949; its findings were re-estimated in 1957 as follows: 48,000 acres available for agriculture (partly in production and partly worked out), 8,100 acres under shrub, unsuitable for agriculture, and 8,000 acres under forest.

The acreage utilized over the past seven years was approximately as follows: coconut, 4,865; taro, 3,175; yams, 1,750; tapioca, 1,195; bananas, 1,100; kumaras, 500 and citrus, 25. Individual plantations are small and seldom exceed one fourth of an acre.

Land is vested in the Crown, subject to indigenous rights gained and held under ancient custom and usage. Practically all land in the island is held under (Niuean) family ownership. Alienation is prohibited, as is the lease of indigenous land for a period exceeding sixty years.

The Administration regulates the prices paid by traders to growers. Since 1949, two trading firms have supplied copra under a nine-year contract to the Ministry of Food in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. By 1947, the copra price had reached NZ£43 a ton f.o.b. and by 1954, it had risen further to NZ£70 a ton f.o.b.^{3/} In spite of subsequent reductions (NZ£65 in 1955, and NZ£54 in 1957), exports have remained well above the average.

Bananas, up to 1950 were sold at fixed prices to the New Zealand Marketing Department. They are now purchased by the local Administration for sale to a firm in New Zealand. A severe drought in 1957 practically stopped all banana exports when the year came to a close. The price per case rose from about 13 shillings in 1948 to 17 shillings in 1953 and to NZ£1.2 shillings in 1957.

The exports of kumaras have followed closely the fluctuations of the potato market in New Zealand.

Experimental plantings of citrus by the Administration in 1949 proved successful, and local growers bought about 300 plants in 1950 for their own plantations. Coffee seedlings were planted in 1955 in an attempt to establish an additional export crop.

The island has high-grade timber. A saw bench for small trees was installed by the Administration in 1950, and a new mill was put into operation in 1957 which enables normal logs to be cut. The mill will be further improved so that banana cases can be made locally.

^{3/} The local currency is the NZ£ which is equal to the pound sterling or US\$2.80.

The only livestock that can be kept under prevailing conditions are pigs and poultry. The quality of the livestock has been improved from time to time by the importation of new bloodstock and new strains.

Industries are based on local handicrafts. Plaited hats and mats are made in every home by the women and are exported to New Zealand and Australia. Import restrictions, placed by the Australian authorities on plaited ware in 1956, were eased the following year.

The island has seventy-two miles of all-weather roads. There are no airfields. The port of Alofi is an open roadstead and vessels anchor off shore; the wharf has been extended several times, most recently in 1957. Calls by cargo and passenger ships from New Zealand increased from eleven in 1947 to eighteen in 1953; nineteen such ships called in 1957. One steamship company maintains a monthly service between the island and New Zealand. A single wire telephone system was installed in 1947 and connects all villages. A radio station at Alofi provides communications overseas.

PUBLIC FINANCE

The Administration derives only limited revenue from local sources to balance its budget. The yearly deficit is met by special and general subsidies from the New Zealand Government. A four-year development plan, at a cost of NZ\$69,000 from New Zealand funds, was approved in 1949 and provided for contributions for new schools, improvement of port facilities and the main road, houses, hospital extension, water supply and scholarships. For the same purposes, between NZ\$45,000 and NZ\$55,000 annually was appropriated by New Zealand in 1954, 1955 and 1956.

Income tax at New Zealand rates is payable, but there are few taxable incomes. The Island Council levies an "aid to revenue" tax, which in 1956 was increased from 10s. to NZ\$1 for each male between the ages of eighteen to sixty. In 1957, the revenue from this source was spent on improvements to the village water supplies. A duty of 5 per cent is levied on the f.o.b. value of copra exported.

The fiscal year ends on 30 March.

Revenue and expenditure
(thousand New Zealand pounds)

	<u>1947</u>	<u>1953</u>	<u>1957</u>
Revenue	28.4	68.9	149.9
Expenditure	42.7	137.1	284.6
Deficit	14.3	71.2	...
Subsidy	6.5	83.2	163.6

The only bank is the Post Office Savings Bank. The excess of deposits over withdrawals in 1957 was NZ£7,369, compared with NZ£8,112 in 1953. It is reported that the need for credit facilities for individual growers is not pressing as there is no agricultural indebtedness and the exports can be produced by the Niueans without a great deal of financial help.

The comparatively high import figures are largely due to the purchase of building materials. New Zealand customs tariffs are in force. There is free trade between the Territory and New Zealand; however, since 1951, local duties have been levied on cotton piece goods, sugar and twist tobacco, irrespective of the country of origin.

The bulk of the trade is with New Zealand. The unfavourable balance of trade corresponds roughly to the value of the imports financed by New Zealand subsidies.

Imports and exports
(thousand New Zealand pounds)

	<u>1947</u>	<u>1953</u>	<u>1957</u>			
Imports	58.7	116.9	153.6			
Exports	45.6	72.7	58.7			
Principal exports	<u>amount</u>	<u>value</u>	<u>amount</u>	<u>value</u>	<u>amount</u>	<u>value</u>
Copra	695 tons	28.5	601 tons	41.1	740 tons	40.1
Kumaras	-	-	19,192 bags	17.7	1,377 bags	1.7
Plaited ware	-	15.8	-	7.1	-	5.4
Bananas	-	-	3,325 cases	2.8	6,124 cases	6.4

SOCIAL CONDITIONS

The provisions relating to human rights which apply in New Zealand also apply to Niue. The following are measures designed to protect the Niuean: (1) alienation of land, except to the Crown, is forbidden, and land cannot be taken in payment of debt; and, (2) no contract entered into by a Niuean is enforceable without the consent of the High Court.

Whilst custom permits wives to have as much authority as husbands in the home, women have no voice in the running of village affairs or in the nomination of Island Council members.

Unlike other Polynesian communities, the Niueans have no chiefs and no hereditary rank. The basic social unit is the family under the authority of a family head. To a great extent, the village social structure is founded upon the Church; most of the inhabitants are adherents of either the London Missionary Society or the Roman Catholic Mission.

Most islanders are farmers, working their land. The Administration is the largest employer, followed by a few trading firms. There is no unemployment problem. The basic wage rates in 1956 was 8s. 9d. per seven-hour day for unskilled labour, compared with 7s. in 1950. There is a tendency to emigrate and seek employment in New Zealand. No labour disputes have arisen in the past ten years apart from the refusal of Niueans in 1947 to work ships on Sundays, and a question of contract prices for road repairs carried out by villagers. Road repairs are now done by the Public Works Department.

Five Niuean trading companies, working along lines similar to co-operative societies, have been registered.

The standard of living of many Niueans has improved in the past decade with the increased value of exports. They are better clothed and better housed than before and are able to buy varied foodstuffs. The only real housing problems are overcrowding and insufficient ventilation, which are regulated by local ordinance. In one of the villages, twenty model Niuean-type houses are being built to designs and with assistance of the Public Works Department.

The need for assistance to the aged and indigent is small, because of the broad concept of family responsibilities. The village constable ensures that these responsibilities are not ignored. Community halls have recently been built in two villages; they are used for meetings, evening entertainment and lectures.

During the years 1951 to 1957 criminal convictions averaged 500 a year; the majority of the offences are of a minor nature, such as violations of the Sanitation Ordinance.

PUBLIC HEALTH

The Niuean is entitled to free medical and dental care, including hospital services. There is no malaria but filariasis and yaws are prevalent; tuberculosis is the main health problem.

The Medical Department in 1957 consisted of the Chief Medical Officer, a matron, a child welfare sister, one assistant medical practitioner, two dental practitioners and eighteen nurses. In 1947, the Department had the same staff, with the exception of the nursing section which had five nurses. Difficulties have been encountered during the past decade in the recruitment of senior personnel. There is one hospital at Alofi with sixteen beds in 1948, twenty in 1950 and thirty in 1957. Attached to it is an X-ray unit, a dispensary and a dental clinic. A children's ward of eight beds was added in 1952 and a tuberculosis ward with twenty beds in 1955. The hospital is often overcrowded. A mobile clinic was put into operation in 1950. A child welfare nurse takes up residence in each village for a week at a time. Annual medical and dental examinations have been held in the schools since 1948. Health films have been shown regularly since 1951.

The first step in the tuberculosis campaign was taken in 1953 with the BCG vaccination of infants and school children. This has now become routine. In an effort to combat filariasis, each person has been given monthly doses of hetrazan since October 1955. Yaws had ceased to be a major problem by 1952. During the last two months of 1956, a new yaws campaign was carried out, covering 75 per cent of the population.

A survey made in 1946 revealed malnutrition among children, particularly infants. The principal causes were incorrect feeding habits of the parents and the custom of early weaning of infants. Since 1948, infant food has been distributed free. In the same year, a scheme for the provision of milk to school children came into operation.

Several Niuean medical and dental practitioners have been trained at the Central Medical School, Suva, Fiji since 1947.

An ophthalmologist of the South Pacific Commission, a dental specialist and a nutritionist of the South Pacific Health Service visited the island for investigational and advisory purposes in 1954. The filariasis problem was studied by an expert of the South Pacific Commission in 1957.

Water supply is a problem because there are no running streams of surface water on the island. Rain water is stored in tanks and reservoirs. These facilities have been enlarged and improved each year. The digging of a deep well on an experimental basis was started in 1947 in Alofi. Following several tests regarding the quality of the water, the scheme was completed in 1954.

Expenditure on health services
(New Zealand pounds)

	<u>1947</u>	<u>1953</u>	<u>1957</u>
Amount expended	7,293	17,748	39,360
Amount per head of population	1. 17s. 11d.	3. 15s. 5d.	8. 6s. 6d.

EDUCATIONAL CONDITIONS

Education is free and compulsory between the ages of six and fourteen, but most children attend school until sixteen or older. In 1947, the Administration maintained three schools and the London Missionary Society nine smaller schools.

On the request of the islanders, the Government decided to take over all schools and in 1951 the nine mission schools were replaced by four regional administration schools. Thus seven regional schools were formed, staffed in 1951 by five European and sixty-seven Niuean teachers.

The curriculum is based on New Zealand educational requirements in so far as they are relevant to the island's needs. The emphasis is on agriculture, weaving and manual training. Lectures and demonstrations in agriculture have been given to senior boys since 1950. The main clauses of the United Nations Charter are taught in the Niuean language.

Before 1952, the teaching was solely in English, although greater emphasis had been placed on the vernacular since 1950. This policy was changed in 1952 with the agreement of the Island Council. The medium of instruction in the first two years at school is now the vernacular. English is introduced in the third year and, in the fifth, English predominates. But the teaching of the finer points of the vernacular is continued until the child leaves school.

The educational system has been extended by the establishment of a technical school, where wood-work instruction is given to all boys of the senior level; an accelerate school for Niuean children of exceptional ability; and a post-primary school. A school for English-speaking children has existed since 1956. The accelerate school and the post-primary school were combined in a college-type institution in 1957.

Teachers are largely recruited from the village schools and trained by a pupil-teacher system, supplemented by a course, given twice a week during three years. A teachers' college with two-year class training was formed in 1957 with fourteen boys and girls who had completed their post-primary education. The number of teachers had increased to six Europeans and eighty-five Niueans by 1957.

Since 1948, scholarships have been available to Niuean students for study in secondary schools in New Zealand. Scholarships were awarded to two boys in 1948; a girl was a recipient for the first time in 1953. In 1957, four boys and seven girls were in New Zealand for secondary education. Two teachers are sent to New Zealand each year for six months to take observation courses in primary and Maori schools.

On the transfer of the mission schools, the villagers, assisted by the Administration, built the four school buildings for the new regional schools. In 1954, funds were appropriated by the New Zealand Government for four other school buildings. The existing schools can now accommodate about 1,200; the average yearly attendance is 1,100. Educational films and film-strips are shown at all schools.

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Since 1953, afternoon classes for adults in English, arithmetic and social studies have been held about twice a month in each village.

Educational expenditure
(New Zealand pounds)

	<u>1947</u>	<u>1953</u>	<u>1957</u>
General expenditure	...	16,041	32,087
Capital expenditure	...	2,391	14,261

Cultural institutions and mass communications

The Country Library Service of New Zealand provides books for a circulating library.

A "Newsletter" which is published thrice monthly in both English and the vernacular, is the main means of informing the people of local and foreign news, including government decisions and policy. About 800 copies of each issue are printed and distributed free. Daily news, copied from Radio New Zealand and other stations, is printed and distributed to all schools and villages. In addition to educational films, commercial films are shown weekly in most villages by a private operator.
