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EDITORIAL NOTES.

THE subject of copra deterioration with age is one which has received considerable discussion of late. It has been thought by some that the length of time which copra can be stored is limited to a few months, while others were of the opinion that it will keep indefinitely.

The results of experiments which have been in progress in this Department for some months indicate that copra can be kept for a considerable number of years without deterioration providing it is properly dried in the first place. This is confirmed by the following findings.

In a copra store in Rabaul there are some hundreds of bags of copra at least three and a half years old. Some of these were recently opened, the copra examined and found to be almost as good as the day it was made, and still of sufficient quality to be exported as first class. Other batches of copra—fifteen, twelve, and nine months old—were also examined with the same result.

If copra is to be stored for a prolonged period it will gradually lose or gain water until it is at last in equilibrium with the moisture of the atmosphere; but, if the copra contains considerable water, moulds and insects will ruin it before it has dried to the equilibrating point. On the other hand, if the copra is well dried, no damage will be caused during the slight absorption of moisture which takes place.

As the result of experiments in this Department, it would appear that for prolonged storage the copra should contain less than 7 per cent. moisture, although this figure is only tentative. The best Rabaul hot-air copra usually contains approximately 5 per cent. moisture, so that, if it is properly stored, it should keep for a considerable period without deterioration.
