

CONSULTATIONS IN SAMOA

During recent months the Government have carefully studied the whole question, and consulted with the Samoan leaders to discover in what manner the wishes of the Samoans can best be met in the immediate future.

In undertaking this task the Government have been greatly helped in an examination of the position by the members of the United Nations Mission, which, at New Zealand's request, is visiting Western Samoa in connection with the Samoan petition to the United Nations Trusteeship Council.

OBLIGATIONS OF TRUSTEESHIP

Under the terms of the trusteeship agreement New Zealand is charged with the responsibility of progressively increasing the participation of the Samoan people in the control of their own affairs. Our consultations with the Samoan leaders have led us to believe that a substantial step forward can now be taken. Accordingly, the Government have worked out plans which will give the Samoans an increased measure of responsibility immediately, and prepare them for taking further progressive steps towards self-government. These plans are now being discussed with the representatives of the Samoan people.

The details of the Government's proposals are—

COUNCIL OF STATE

The establishment of a Council of State to advise the Administrator or the High Commissioner, as he may in future be called, on all important matters of policy affecting the territory. This Council would be composed of the Administrator, as representative of New Zealand, and the three Fautua, who are, at present, the acknowledged representatives of the Samoan people. Future appointments to the Council would be made by the Governor-General on the nomination of the members of the Fono of Faipule, and the Samoan members of the legislature sitting together.

LEGISLATURE

It is proposed to replace the present Legislative Council by a legislature in which the Samoan members would have an absolute majority. This body would be composed of the following groups:—

The members of the Council of State:

Eleven members nominated by the Fono of Faipule:

Five representatives of the local European community elected under adult suffrage:

Six official members.

The Administrator would act as President of the Legislature, and would possess only a casting vote. The three Fautua would have all the rights of ordinary members.

POWERS OF LEGISLATURE

Whereas in the past the powers of the Legislative Council were limited, it is proposed that for the future the legislature should have full powers in all matters affecting the territory. In the case of legislation on the following subjects, however, the consent of the New Zealand Government is necessary before it becomes law: external affairs, defence, the control of the Public Service, the imposition of discriminatory Customs duties, currency and banking, immigration, and any matters affecting the prerogative of the Crown or the title to Crown lands.