

An outstanding event was the visit of the Prime Minister of New Zealand to Samoa in 1944, which aroused a warm sense of personal friendship and appreciation among the people. Progress was again delayed by the international situation: the slow process of bringing into effect the new trusteeship system, and the coming of the United Nations Mission itself. During the thirty-three years of New Zealand Administration, therefore, there has been barely ten years of fruitful activity.

42. Under these circumstances it is quite understandable that many grievances should have been generated. During its investigations a wide range of criticism of the New Zealand Administration was brought to the attention of the Mission by both Samoan and European witnesses. New Zealanders themselves, including Government officials, were in some cases highly critical. Many of these grievances and criticisms are discussed in other parts of the report.

43. Such criticisms ranged all the way from minor complaints, such as the inadequate water-supply of a certain village, or non-payment of promised compensation for certain trees destroyed in building a military road, to sweeping attacks, for instance, upon the educational system, the wage structure, political control from New Zealand, and the general failure of New Zealand to prepare the people for self-government. Some witnesses went back as far as the 1918 influenza epidemic in the attempt to demonstrate the inadequacy of New Zealand rule. Frequent mention was made of "broken promises" and of grievances being "ignored."

44. A number of the matters raised were based on incorrect information. Samoa, without adequate channels of public information, either external or internal, is a prey to loose rumours, which travel fast and grow in the process; the Mission itself did not escape the breath of rumour. The fact that consent of the people has not been needed to determine a policy or carry through a proposed measure has frequently meant that the Administration has failed to explain its motives. Furthermore, since the people have no share in such actions and hence carry no responsibility, almost any move by the Administration is likely to be misunderstood and criticized.

45. An important fact, however, is that grievances and criticisms such as these have not prevented the people from requesting that relations be continued with New Zealand. The wishes of the Samoans have been made clear in the petition. The Europeans seem virtually unanimous in support of a continued New Zealand Trusteeship. One of the European members of the Legislative Council made this clear at the original meeting held on 30 October, 1946, when he said: "The great majority of the European residents of Western Samoa are in favour of New Zealand having the trusteeship for Western Samoa."