

## CHAPTER II—POLITICAL ADVANCEMENT

### A. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. The Territory of Western Samoa, in view of its small size (about 1,130 square miles) and limited resources, would not be expected to attain in the foreseeable future the political status of a fully independent nation, but no geographical impediment exists to prevent the development of self-government. For comparison it may be noted that the Territory is more than four times the size of the Kingdom of Tonga.

2. The total population of the Territory is currently estimated to be about 72,000, and is rising with extraordinary rapidity through remarkably high excess of births over deaths in both the Samoan and the European groups. If present trends continue, the population should number about 150,000 within 2 decades. Planning in relation to self-government and welfare must take account of this strong upward surge in population numbers among both the major population elements. Small groups of Chinese, nearly all elderly labourers, and of islanders from neighbouring Pacific territories, are not significant political elements.

### B. STATUS OF THE INHABITANTS OF WESTERN SAMOA

3. The categories "Samoa" and "European" which have developed historically, each with its particular legal status, in Samoa, would appear to have no sound justification in the long-term political and social development of the Territory. About 93 per cent. of the present "Europeans" are partly of Samoan ancestry, and nearly all of them consider Samoa as their home. Excluding Government officials, employees of the New Zealand Reparations Estates, and missionary groups, there are only about seventy-five full-European residents, many of them married to persons of Samoan ancestry. The distinction between "European" and "Samoa" seems unnecessary, and is certainly unfortunate in its psychological repercussions (See Chapter III, Section A). Part-Samoans, for example, are found in both groups. In principle, therefore, it is desirable to abolish this division as rapidly as possible. All *bona fide* permanent residents of the Territory should be placed on an equal legal footing as residents or citizens of Western Samoa. The situation in Tonga could profitably be studied in this connection.

4. Such a major step, however, will require a transition period. Persons now of European status should, of course, be given the right to choose whether they wish to be classified as residents (or citizens) of Western Samoa or persons of foreign nationality. It seems indispensable that the population of foreign nationality must be given special protection, though not special privileges.