

70. Village councils should be given the constitutional right, if they so wish, to make local by-laws. In the interests of general unity and welfare, such by-laws should be approved by, or at least made subject to disallowance by, the central authority before violations are made punishable by judicial tribunals. Such by-laws in the criminal field should be confined to minor offences (see paragraph 81 of this chapter). Similar principles could be made applicable to district councils if the Samoan people so wish. All these bodies should be encouraged to develop the fullest possible initiative and sense of responsibility, particularly in such matters as public health and school attendance. Continuation of the very important work of the women's committees should also be a part of this plan.

71. The Government services could be strengthened through greater co-ordination of Samoan village and district personnel and activities.

L. THE URBAN AREA OF APIA

72. The only urban area in the Territory is at Apia. Here live nearly all the Europeans, and an increasing number of Samoans who have detached themselves from organized Samoan communities. So far the administrative affairs of this community of several thousand people have been handled directly by the central Government Departments.

73. The Mission believes that careful study should be given to the possibility of developing a city or town government for Apia, just as districts and villages in the outside areas have their own appropriate forms of government. Already a small European group at the Aleisa land settlement, some eight miles from Apia, have a council, with a mayor and councillors, and the power to make local by-laws for the settlement (see Annex I) ; similarly, a city council or board might well be developed for Apia, with powers to make appropriate local legislation.

74. This has some historical precedent in the old municipality of Apia. It would be a mistake, however, to think of the new city as a successor to this municipality, which was really a foreign concession area. Apia, as the capital town, must continue as now to be an essential part of the Territory, and not a foreign area. Furthermore, the boundaries would need to be redrawn, as the area of the old municipality now contains a number of organized Samoan villages.

75. Because Apia is the business centre, and a great part of its resident population lives in accordance with western customs, its administration calls for somewhat different treatment for the rest of Western Samoa. So long as distinctions are made, not on a racial basis, but on differences in ways of life, in distinctive needs and economic conditions, in the existence of special problems, there should be no feeling of discrimination between this urban area and rural districts. All the inhabitants of the city, irrespective of race, would have the same rights and responsibilities.