

CHAPTER III—SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT

1. As has been noted above, the petition from the leaders of Western Samoa was the outgrowth of many mingled emotions. Outstanding was the natural, inherent desire of every people to determine their own destinies and consequent irritation at all alien rule. Mingled with this primary emotion were a wide range of irritations based on current grievances, real or imagined. The correction of the grievances would not, of itself, be sufficient to satisfy the Samoans; neither would a mere alteration in governmental structure. Both should be carried out concurrently to establish future relations between New Zealand and Western Samoa on a sound basis. Moreover, a new governmental structure as proposed above is only a first step towards full self-government. Additional steps should be considered and prepared in several fields.

A. RACIAL EQUALITY

2. In the light of the mass of testimony presented to the Mission, the most deep-seated grievance, contributing perhaps more than anything else to the present state of mind, is the privileged situation accorded to Europeans. Again and again witnesses gave instances of Europeans being preferred over Samoans in matters of pay, in matters of advancement, in appointments, in treatment accorded in hospitals or schools. "The whites behave as masters and treat us as an inferior race, and this in our own country, Samoa," was the burden of many complaints. The Samoans see in their control of political power the way to achieve racial equality.

3. The abnormal character of this situation is aggravated by the arbitrary distinction made in the law between persons who are granted European status and those who are not. European status can be acquired by :

- (a) The legitimate descendents in the male line of a European ;
- (b) Persons counted as Samoans who do not have more than 50 per cent. of Samoan blood, and who petition the Court for European status, whoever their ascendants may be ;
- (c) Persons not of Samoan status whose male ancestors in the male line have not more than seventy-five per cent. of Polynesian blood, regardless of whether they have any white European ancestry at all.

Legal technicalities have now reduced the situation to a point where, for instance, a person might be denied European status because his father was a full Samoan, but granted it if his father were a Chinese or a Solomon Islander.