

ANNEX VIII.—STATEMENT MADE IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF NEW ZEALAND ON 27 AUGUST, 1947, BY ACTING PRIME MINISTER, THE RIGHT HON. W. NASH, ON POLITICAL ADVANCEMENT IN WESTERN SAMOA

INTRODUCTION

I desire to inform the House that the Government have under consideration certain constitutional changes in Western Samoa. The House will recall that, soon after the Government assumed office, they became aware that the aspirations and political development of the Samoans enabled them to take a more responsible part in the Government of the Territory.

In the period before 1939 some preliminary steps were taken towards giving the Samoan people a greater voice in the management of their own affairs, but the disturbed conditions resulting from the war delayed the development of further measures directed to this end. In 1944 the Prime Minister, accompanied by Mr. A. G. Osborne, M.P., Parliamentary Under-Secretary, visited Samoa to learn at first hand the ideas held by the Samoan leaders themselves regarding political advancement.

TRUSTEESHIP AGREEMENT

In October, 1946, a draft trusteeship agreement for Western Samoa was submitted to the United Nations by the New Zealand Government, and placed before the General Assembly for consideration and approval. This provided for the replacement of the League of Nations' mandate by the trusteeship agreement, which brought the territory within the framework of the international trusteeship system, established under the Charter of the United Nations. The agreement was approved by the General Assembly on 13th December, 1946.

In the meantime the Samoan people had been consulted regarding the terms of the draft. Their representatives declared that they recognized that the trusteeship agreement marked an advance on the mandate, and they stated their appreciation of the sympathetic manner in which they had been treated by the Government and of the progress made during the past ten years in developing social services, but they felt that their ultimate aim of self-government would not be furthered by accepting the agreement. Accordingly, they asked that Samoa be granted self-government and that New Zealand remain as adviser and protector of Samoa.

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.