

47. HUMAN RIGHTS

The islanders enjoy full civil rights as subjects of His Majesty and there is no discrimination of race or creed in the administration of justice. The admission of immigrants is strictly controlled and no undesirable person is allowed to enter. Land, the only valuable property in the island, is handed down from one generation to the next according to custom, and the right to ownership and possession is safeguarded by the operations of the Native Land Court.

PART II.—SOCIAL CONDITIONS

48. LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT

The only substantial employer of labour is the Administration, which employs Natives in the Police, Public Works, Transport, and other executive Departments. There is little regular work on a wages basis, consisting chiefly of the discharging and loading of ships (of which there were eleven calls during the year). With the assistance of tradesmen from New Zealand, considerable work was done on repairs to and maintenance of public buildings, roads, and other amenities. Wage scales were raised generally during the year and the rates now being paid to Natives are as high as anywhere in the South Pacific.

Provision has been made in the Cook Islands Industrial Unions Regulations for registration of an industrial union and the means provided for the settlement of disputes; no move has as yet been made to form such a union. There were no recorded labour disputes during the year.

No migratory labour enters the Island, but approximately seventeen Niuean workers are employed by the New Zealand Government at the Island of Raoul on an annual contract basis; wages and conditions are generous and the chance of employment is eagerly sought by the Niueans.

A number of Niueans proceed to New Zealand each year to seek employment in a larger field and to learn trades. On account of the infrequent shipping calls, the volume of departures is not great and presents no problem to the territory.

The Church in Niue provides a closely knit organization of the Natives, particularly as only one denomination exists, and, with the Island Council, appears to provide adequate representation in social affairs.

The bulk of the population is engaged in cultivation of Native lands and harvesting of crops for consumption and export. The price of such produce purchased by the trading firms for export is regulated by the Administration to ensure that the grower receives the full value under current price levels.

49. PUBLIC HEALTH

There is no malaria on the island, but the endemic diseases of filariasis and yaws are prevalent amongst the Natives. A hospital is maintained at Alofi by the Administration and visiting staff pay weekly visits to all outlying villages. The water-supply is secured from rain-water tanks and reservoirs. There is no system for the mechanical disposal of sewage; on account of the porous nature of the terrain, this is believed not to cause any ill effects.

The public-health staff at 31st March, 1948, consisted of one Native medical practitioner (on loan from Western Samoa), one European Matron, one European nurse, five Native nurses, and two Niuean Dental Officers. In addition, there were two Native dispensary assistants and one Native dental clinic assistant.

Since 4th June, 1947, the island has been without the services of a European Medical Officer and the medical work has been under the supervision of the Native Medical Practitioner from that date. The two Samoan nurses returned to Western Samoa on 2nd March, 1948, and have not been replaced. It is anticipated that a European Medical Officer will shortly be available.

All medical and dental treatment, including hospitalization, is provided free of charge to Natives.