

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. GEOGRAPHICAL

THE Group consists of four atoll islands, one of which (Swain's Island or Olosega) was annexed to American Samoa in 1925.

The three islands--Fakaofu, Nukunono, and Atafu--governed by New Zealand are situated between latitude 8° and 10° south and longitude 171° to 173° west. The distance from Apia to Fakaofu is about 270 miles, that from Fakaofu to Nukunono about 40 miles, and from Nukunono to Atafu about 57 miles.

2. TOPOGRAPHICAL

Each atoll consists of a number of small coral islets round the lagoon, varying in length from 100 yards to 4 miles, but all are fairly uniform as to width--viz., 100 to 400 yards--and, with one or two exceptions, all are approximately from 8 ft. to 10 ft. high.

The size of each atoll is approximately as under :--

Island.	Land Area.	Length North to South.	Width East to West.	Circumference.	Number of Islets.
	Acres.	Miles.	Miles.	Miles.	
Fakaofu ..	650	6½	5	16	61
Nukunono ..	1,350	7	6½	24	22
Atafu ..	500	3	2½	8	19

The largest islet in the Group is on the east of the atoll of Nukunono ; it is four miles long and 300 yards wide.

The reef at each island extends only a short distance from the shore, and then descends steeply into very deep water, so that the few anchorages are not good. Vessels usually land or ship their stores and personnel in the local canoes or small boats. If vessels remain at night, a lamp is placed on the shore to assist the officer on watch to maintain his ship in position.

The landing-places on the reef on each living islet are difficult to negotiate, and great skill is required on the part of the people to shoot their canoes over the reef, except when the sea is very calm. All the inhabitants reside on one small coral islet on which the village is located, and which in each case is on the leeward side of the atoll--i.e., the north-west, west, or south-west. This is an advantage to vessels visiting these islands, as the prevailing trade-wind, which is from the south-east, as well as the drift of the current from the east, both tend under normal conditions to cause any vessel lying off the western shore to drift away from the reef. But from time to time heavy swells or winds from other directions make the reefs unworkable.

Coconut-palms are, of course, a characteristic feature of the landscape, but kanava or tauanave (*Cordia subcordata*) is the only timber tree of outstanding importance ; this is used for canoes, houses, or vessels for domestic use. It is a very durable wood, not attacked by rot or marine borer, and all canoes are made of this timber. These canoes are built up in sections laced with sennit made of coconut fibre, as many as twenty pieces of wood being used to make the complete hull. There are no kanava trees with trunks of sufficient length to make the hull from one complete piece of timber. They are short, stubby trees, and good specimens rarely exceed 2 ft. in diameter. Another useful tree is fala, the edible pandanus, the timber of which may also be used in the