

The London Mission, exclusive of its High School at Leulumoega, the Girls' School at Papauta, and the Pastors College at Malua, have an attendance of some eight thousand children in their village schools in Samoa. It will thus be seen that this society is responsible for the education of about four-fifths of the Samoans; and as the other societies have largely followed the methods of the L.M.S., it will perhaps be most useful for the purpose of your inquiry to briefly outline the L.M.S. system.

It has to be borne in mind that the work of the society is primarily of a religious character, and that while it has sought to do the best possible for the secular education of the people, that work has necessarily held a subordinate position, for our school-teachers are also our village pastors. While saying this the L.M.S. can assert, without boasting, that they have achieved considerable success in the work of education, and that their village children in this respect will bear favourable comparison even with the village schools of New Zealand, always bearing in mind their many limitations.

Having given the Samoans a written language and a literature, the educational problem which confronted the early missionaries, and which still confronts us to-day, is how most effectually to reach the great body of the Samoan people, scattered as they are in many small villages along the coast-line, with the means of intercommunication poor and limited. They decided that the only effectual means would be to train a Native ministry, to live the village life, and to give these men an education fitted to make them not only evangelists, but also teachers in the schools.

The institution at Malua was the outcome of that decision. It was started exactly seventy-six years ago, on very simple lines; but the experiment proved successful, and it has now developed into an organized and comprehensive scheme of work.

Every village in Samoa has now its native-trained pastor, who is also the village schoolmaster: and although the standard of education falls below that in the schools of New Zealand, it has been, up till now, quite adequate to the needs of the villagers. Probably not 1 per cent. of the Samoans are unable to read and write, and the children of these village schools are enabled, before they leave them, to reach a standard about equal to the Fourth Standard in the New Zealand schools. A syllabus for the year is printed and circulated throughout Samoa; the pastors' schools are examined at the end of the school year, and it is expected that every child shall secure a minimum of 50 per cent. of marks in each subject in which it is taught. The examination is held by the English missionary in charge of each particular district, and the results are carefully tabulated and announced at a public meeting of villagers in each examination centre. There is keen rivalry between the villages, and the pastor who fails to maintain the standard of the school is a marked man.

In connection with these schools there is attached to each mission station a district school. This school is taught by a Native master, who has no ministerial charge, and is under the immediate charge of the English missionary. It is known as the *fua-masani* school, and is a higher-grade school for the more ambitious youths of the village schools. For the most part these lads are candidates for the High School at Leulumoega, and all prepare for the entrance examination there.

At Leulumoega a three-years training is given in a sort of arts course for those who are thinking of entering the college at Malua. In connection with the Leulumoega School there is a school of carpentry, and the object is to turn out youths from this school fitted for office work or artisan work, as the case may be. Students for Malua on leaving Leulumoega must pass an entrance examination, and on admission are put through a five-years course of training to fit them as pastors and teachers. It will be seen that the village schoolmaster of the L.M.S. undergoes a course of training extending over eight years to fit him for his work. Leulumoega students are all single men, but Malua men are encouraged to marry in their second year of tuition, so that their young wives may attend the classes given by the lady missionaries and so be fitted to be useful helpers to their husbands, both in the work of the church and in the school.

All the village schools are mixed schools, the girls for the most part being boarders in the pastors' family. The higher education of the girls proved a rather difficult problem at the outset, but we have a large boarding-school at Papauta for the girls of Upolu and Savaii, accommodating 120 girls. It is intended at an early date to erect a similar school on Savaii; and there is already an excellent school for the girls of Tutuila, at Atauloma. These schools are officered by European ladies, assisted by the Native mistresses.

The outbreak of war hung up for the time a largely extended scheme of higher education which the L.M.S. have had in view for some years, and for which they have been accumulating a sinking fund. The project is to centralize the higher education at Malua, and to form there an island university with a divinity school, so that competent pastors and schoolmasters may be there trained, that youths may be educated for government and commercial offices, and that the more ambitious may be equipped for a medical course, or other of the professions, at one of the Dominion universities.

The Citizens Committee deputed me to interview the representatives of the various societies working in Samoa. It may be useful to this parliamentary assembly to briefly recount their views:—

The Rev. Bishop Darnand, of the Roman Catholic Church, accorded me a long and courteous interview. Summed up in a few words, His Lordship deprecated Government interference. The Roman Catholics would endeavour to conform to the standard of education required by the Government, and would welcome any financial assistance to enable them to improve their educational work; but the Church desired to educate her children by her own teachers and in her own way. To quote his own words, His Lordship desired for the Roman Catholics liberty and freedom.

The Rev. Mr. Shinkfield, the Chairman of the Wesleyan Mission, had left Samoa before this committee was formed, but he had already been in correspondence with Rev. A. Hough, the principal of the Malua Institution, and had interviewed him on the subject. Mr. Hough has informed me of the purport of Mr. Shinkfield's views, and has handed to me the correspondence. Mr. Shinkfield informs us that the Wesleyans are opposed to Government control of their schools, on the grounds both of efficiency and public economy. He points out in his correspondence that the Government in Fiji have left the schools in the hands of the missions, and that the result from every point of view has been admirable. He thinks that the interests both of the Samoans, as also of the Government, will be best served by leaving the work of education in the hands of the missionaries.

I regret that I was unable to obtain an interview with the leader of the Mormon Mission. He was absent from home on the two occasions on which I called, and my own subsequent absence from Apia prevented an interview.

The Director of Education called upon Mr. Hough at Malua, before leaving Samoa, and roughly outlined the details of his suggested scheme. The impression Mr. Hough obtained was that the Government propose to begin by erecting five central boarding schools on Upolu, and three on Savaii. These schools to be staffed by Europeans with Native assistants, and the scholars to be picked youths from the existing mission schools. The teaching to be secular and undenominational. The nature of the religious teaching to be imparted and the process of the selection of these youths did not transpire.

In fulfilment of the duty entrusted to me by the Citizens' Committee I waited upon His Excellency General Robin, who was good enough to accord me an interview, but could afford me no information. Officially he knew nothing beyond the fact that the Government will ultimately undertake the entire work of education. He remarked that whatever scheme the Director of Education had evolved it was not yet that of the Government. Whatever scheme was elaborated would have to be first discussed by the Advisory Council. He recommended the citizens if they had any ideas on the subject to submit them to the meeting of Parliamentarians.

The opinion of the Citizens' Committee on learning the foregoing information was strongly opposed to any Government interference in the work of education in Samoa. They regard the scheme set forth by the Director of Education as crude and unsatisfactory, and an unnecessary interference with the work being successfully accomplished by the various missions. They view with dismay the unnecessary expenditure of public money, especially in view of the discouraging experiments the Government has already made in the matter of education, and the pressing need for reform, and expenditure in so many directions.

The Citizens' Committee are of opinion that the educational need of Samoa to-day is a High School in Apia for the children of the Europeans and half-castes, and that the efforts of the Government at this juncture should be limited to the establishment of such a school.