

The all-in cost of labour in Samoa to-day is £54 15s. 6d. per annum; before the War it was approximately £30. The all-in cost of labour in New Guinea is £17 10s.; in Noumea the all-in cost is approximately £30; in Ceylon, £17 10s.; in Trinidad, £30. We feel confident labour could be secured from China at an all-in cost of £30 per annum. We would suggest a daily wage of 2s. 6d., out of which the labourer would have to purchase his food and pay his own overhead charges.

If you could secure labour for Samoa at that rate it would have a tremendously stimulating effect; land would appreciate in value, new capital would come into the country, fresh areas would be brought into cultivation, and the Government revenue would benefit appreciably as a result.

2. OVERHEAD CHARGES.

The Government recruit all labour from China, provide for their medical treatment whilst they are employed in Samoa, and for their repatriation when they elect to return to China. To recover the cost of these undertakings the Government have stipulated that every Chinese labourer in Samoa, irrespective of the time he has been here, shall carry with his employment an obligation by his employer to pay to the Government 6d. per day for every day he is in his employ.

The following schedule gives particulars of the men who have been recruited and repatriated since 1920 :—

Year	1920..	..	..	..	..	Recruited.	Repatriated.
	..	..	..	..	..	502	13
„	1921..	..	..	..	..	923	743
„	1922..	..	..	..	..	..	24
„	1922..	..	..	..	..	..	149
„	1923..	..	..	..	..	..	77
„	1923..	..	..	..	..	..	352
„	1924..	..	..	..	..	..	205
„	1925..	..	..	..	..	280	133
„	1926..	..	..	..	..	180	111
						1,885	1,807

The new terms of service came into operation in 1923—i.e., 3s.-a-day wage plus an overhead charge of 6d., making a total of 3s. 6d. per day.

There have been approximately an average of 850 labourers in Samoa since December, 1922, so it would appear the Government should, for the four years ending 31st December, 1926, have recovered by means of overhead charges some £27,540; and as for all we know to the contrary the charge is a permanent one, it would seem that the cost of repatriation of the 878 labourers and bringing in the 460 labourers not being covered by this sum is excessive.

Estimating the cost of repatriation at £10 per head this would be £8,780; the cost of medical attention over the four years (say) £3,400; leaving a balance of £15,360: Total, £27,540: which would apparently be insufficient to cover the cost of recruiting and bringing to Samoa and repatriating 460 labourers, equal to approximately £33 8s. per boy.

We trust you will take this matter up on our behalf.

3. OPTIONAL PURCHASE CLAUSES.

We have been requested to petition to you, if not incompatible with the policy of your Government, to have a purchasing clause inserted in all Government plantation leases, and we suggest 15 per cent. of the capital value down, the balance of the purchase-money and interest thereon at the rate of £5 per centum per annum, calculated quarterly, to be paid in eighty equal quarterly instalments.

We are of the opinion that ownership of the land they are cultivating would tend to make the planters feel more contented and settled, especially in the knowledge that they were providing homes for their families and occupation for their children, who, with the training and information that would be imparted to them by their parents, would become capable planters and useful citizens.

One of the greatest problems the Administration will have to face in the immediate future will be to find work for the rising generation, and the most profitable channel into which their energies can be directed, both for themselves and the country, is undoubtedly agriculture.

4. IMPROVEMENT CLAUSE.

We have been requested by the lessees of the Government plantations to petition you to have the improvement clause in the present lease altered from “The amount of compensation shall not constitute a debt payable by the lessor to the lessee, but shall constitute a charge on the land demised and upon all revenue received therefrom by the Board of Control, Samoa Crown Estates, after the termination of the said term or renewed term,” to read, “The lessor agrees to compensate the lessee for all approved improvements or a permanent character after the termination of the said term or renewed term, at a valuation to be agreed upon by independent valuers.”

5. EXPORT DUTY.

We ask that the value of the export duty on all cacao that passes as standard should be returned to the producers proportionately to the amount of cacao exported, in the form of an approved artificial manure, as we realize the only possible way we can reduce our cost of production is by increasing our output per acre. This would also prove an incentive to improve the quality of our cacao.