

JUSTICE DEPARTMENT.

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE.

Returns are attached. The outstanding feature of the year is the crippling of the authority of the High Court owing to the increasing difficulty experienced in the last half of the year in securing the execution by the Native police of warrants and other processes against persons belonging to the party politically opposed to the Government. The attitude towards the Court of persons who refuse to acknowledge its processes is a corollary to the general policy of passive resistance adopted towards the Administration, and is not dictated by any special sentiment in regard to the administration of justice. Natives belonging to the party adopting this policy are not themselves averse to using the Court as plaintiffs or complainants. The figures in the return of criminal cases are swelled by the conviction on the 28th February, 1928, of 400 Natives (each on two charges) in connection with the picketing of shops by the anti-Government party. The smaller number of civil actions filed reflects, as was anticipated in last year's report, the operation of the Native Trade Debts Ordinance, 1925.

CROWN LAW WORK.

Four Ordinances have been drafted, and the volume of other Crown Law work has been normal.

LAND REGISTRATIONS, ETC.

A return of documents registered in the Land Registry is attached. Sixteen instruments have been registered under the Chattels Transfer Act, ninety marriages recorded, eight probates or other authorities to administer taken out, no petitions in bankruptcy filed, and two companies registered.

Return of Documents registered for the Year ended 31st March, 1928.—Conveyances, 29; mortgages, 10; releases of mortgages, 17; leases, 86; Crown grants, 8; miscellaneous, 47; total, 197.

HIGH COURT OF WESTERN SAMOA, AT APIA.

Return of Criminal Cases for the Year ended 31st March, 1928.—Sitting-days, 181; persons charged, 1,325; convictions recorded, 1,248; dismissed on merits, 46; withdrawn by leave of Court, 31.

Return of Civil Cases for the Year ended 31st March, 1928.—Sitting-days, 107; actions filed, 475; actions heard, 530; judgments given, 479; withdrawn or struck out, 51.

AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT.

The work during the past year has not, owing to the political troubles, proceeded along normal lines. The situation has become increasingly difficult with each successive quarter, until of late months the efforts of the Inspectors—European and Native—to induce the Natives to obey the law regarding cleaning of plantations, searching for beetles, and new plantings have been almost entirely abortive. The District Inspectors have done their best under very trying circumstances, and no blame can be attached to them for the present-day sad condition of Native plantations.

WEATHER.

Weather conditions throughout the year have been very favourable from an agricultural point of view. There have been no prolonged droughts, while the rainfall, although heavy at times, has only on one or two occasions been accompanied by boisterous winds. A severe squall occurring early in February of this year resulted in damage to banana plantations situated in the higher altitudes. Total precipitation for the year 1927 was 132.40 in., an increase of 28.74 in. over the previous year.

COPRA.

(See also chart in Appendix D.)

Production figures for the year ended 31st December, 1927, totalled 11,864 tons, as compared with 12,592 tons of the previous year, a decrease of 728 tons. The figures for the year ended 31st December, 1927, are as hereunder:—

						Tons.
Copra export for year 1927	..	..	..	..	..	11,665
Stocks on hand at 31st December, 1927	..	..	..	..	..	2,434
						14,099
Less stocks on hand at 31st December, 1926	..	..	..	..	..	2,235
						11,864
Production for the year	..	..	..	..	..	11,864
Production for year 1926	..	..	..	..	..	12,592
Production for year 1927	..	..	..	..	..	11,864
Showing decrease of	..	..	..	..	..	728
Native production, 80 per cent; European production, 20 per cent.						

Commenting on the total Native output for the year, it became apparent very soon after the first quarter of 1927 that our anticipations for a record copra year would not be realized. The reasons for this are too well known to require recapitulation here, but sufficient evidence has already