

I.—INTRODUCTORY.

Inquiries concerning points in the 1936–37 report, made by members of the Permanent Mandates Commission during the thirty-third session, are answered in the succeeding pages, reference to such being given in the following index :—

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Western Samoa is comprised of two large islands, Upolu and Savai'i, and the islets of Apolima, Manono, Fanuatapu, Namua, Nu'utele, Nu'ulua, and Nu'usafe'e. The geographical boundaries are latitudes 13 degrees and 15 degrees south, and longitudes 171 degrees and 173 degrees west.

Upolu and Savai'i are each forty-seven miles long and separated by Apolima Strait, eight miles wide, in the centre of which is situated Apolima Islet; the remainder of the islets are found within the fringing reef surrounding Upolu.

The islands of the Group, which cover an area of 1,133 square miles, are mountainous in character, rising to elevations of 6,094 ft. in Savai'i and 3,608 ft in Upolu. As a result the great majority of Natives live in coast villages, there being eleven inland villages only out of a total of 192 in the whole Territory.

The climate is mild and equable, the average temperature during the last ten years being 79·3 degrees Fahrenheit, and the average rainfall for the same period 118·71 in. per annum. At the 31st March, 1938, the Native population was 54,160 and the non-Native population 3,599: total, 57,759 persons.

II.—STATUS OF THE TERRITORY.

The Territory is administered pursuant to a mandate conferred upon His Britannic Majesty, to be exercised on his behalf by the Government of the Dominion of New Zealand, and confirmed by the Council of the League of Nations on the 17th December, 1920.

III.—STATUS OF THE POPULATION.

The Natives of Western Samoa are described in documents of travel as “British-protected persons, Natives of the Mandated Territory of Western Samoa.”

The provisions of the British Nationality and Status of Aliens (in New Zealand) Act, 1928, allow for individual inhabitants of the Territory voluntarily obtaining British naturalization.

Since 1923 certificates of naturalization have been granted to fifteen Native Samoans and to sixteen Europeans.

During the year under review nine part-Samoans of European status applied for and were granted the status of Samoans, together with fifteen of their children, pursuant to the Samoan Status Ordinance, 1934. This Ordinance in its present form requires such applicants to “live as Samoans,” a requirement to which Samoans themselves are not legally subject; it is anticipated there will be an amendment to remove this stipulation, and thus give unconditional expression to a policy that part Samoans of one-half or more Samoan blood may be either Europeans or Samoans, whichever they themselves prefer.

IV. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS.

(a) INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS.

The General International Conventions that have been applied to Western Samoa were described in the report for 1931–32 (page 24). In addition, the International Load-line Convention, signed at London on the 5th July, 1930, which came into force on the 1st July, 1936, has been applied to Western Samoa.

A list of Bi-lateral Agreements extended to the Territory was published in page 72 of the minutes of the twenty-second session of the Permanent Mandates Commission held on 9th November, 1932, and further additions are given in the reports for 1934–35 (page 2) and 1935–36 (page 3).

(b) ECONOMIC EQUALITY.

Save as to the protection afforded to Native Samoans in the inalienability of Native land there are no derogations from the principle of economic equality as regards concessions, land-tenure, or direct or indirect taxation; the question of mining-rights does not apply. There is a preference in Customs import duties of 7½ per cent. in favour of British goods, but no restrictions as regards countries of origin of goods imported, export trade, or shipping.

Immigration is governed by the Samoa Immigration Order, 1930, as amended in 1935.