

I.—INTRODUCTORY.

Inquiries concerning points in the 1937-38 report, made by members of the Permanent Mandates Commission during the thirty-fifth session, are answered in the succeeding pages as follows :—

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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 which is situated Apolima Islet; the remainder of the islets are found within or near 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 eleven years being 79·3 degrees Fahrenheit, and the average rainfall for the same period 120·59 in. per annum. At the 31st March, 1939, the Native population was 55,558 and the non-Native population 3,748: total, 59,306 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 individual inhabitants of the Territory voluntarily to obtain British naturalization.

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

As anticipated in last year's report, the Samoan Status Ordinance 1934 has been amended by deleting its former requirement that part-Samoans of European status on applying for the legal status of Samoans should "live as Samoans." This was done in response to representations made on the ground that Samoans themselves are under no such legal obligation. Actually, however, there has been no application during this year by any part-Samoan of European status to become a Samoan, whereas twenty-eight part-Samoans of Samoan status applied for and were granted registration as Europeans during the period of compilation of the electoral roll for the two European elective seats in the Legislative Council.

There is no legal bar to part-Samoans of one-half or more Samoan blood acquiring the legal status of either Samoans or Europeans, and then reverting to their former status if they find the experience unsatisfactory, though actually no person has yet done so⁽¹⁾. A legitimately born European of less than

(1) See minutes of thirty-fifth session of Permanent Mandates Commission, page 160.