

The present policy and the law do not forbid the exercise and observance of any customs, except such as would interfere with security of life, health, or property. Samoan life away from Apia is occupied on matters in which questions of regulation by law rarely arise, but are of a social nature, actively ordered by a framework of custom and tradition, and so supplying a basis for the partial self-government of village units. Further reference to this system has been made in Chapter V, Native Affairs.

The Administration has noted the comment made by the Permanent Mandates Commission⁽¹⁾ on the subject of social ostracism, which is practised as a means of maintaining the authority of the Native chiefs and orators. In the ultimate resort it is the only power they have, apart from the authority of each individual chief or orator over those of his own family. Perhaps a more detailed description would elucidate study on this question. Upon any offence against social code or village rule, the village social authority—i.e., the group of all its *matai* (village chiefs and orators)—meets and imposes a “fine,” usually of home-grown foodstuffs, to be distributed among and consumed by the *matai*. In the majority of cases the “fine” is paid and both parties are satisfied, because authority for the one and harmonious relations for the other are both maintained. Perhaps the offender is also “banished”—required to leave his village for a time. In the interests of peace and their own future right to similar authority many offenders willingly obey such edicts at the present time, though compulsion is restrained by law. The final outcome is that after a time the offender, if he shows an apologetic demeanour, in which payment of his “fine” is an expected part, is readmitted to the social life of the village, but if he has sufficient strength of personality or justice in his cause others may join him, so that the village becomes split into two factions which, after a period of months or perhaps years, will inevitably sue for peace and become reconciled. Such affairs usually pass off with restraint and dignity on all sides. One is reminded that the weight of social judgments finds its victims, with justice or otherwise, not alone in Samoa.

XV.—LABOUR.

It has been stated in previous reports, and it is still true, that the Native Samoan environment provides little incentive for regular employment for wages.

At certain periods of the year, when, for example, financial contributions are required for social occasions, the Samoan realizes his need for money, but any such needs are temporary only and in general the desire to work continues only so long as the need exists.

In view of the unreliability of the supply of Native Samoan labour and of the decision to repatriate the remaining Chinese labourers at the end of 1940, an endeavour is being made to recruit suitable Polynesian labour from Niue and the Cook Islands.

In reply to the point raised by M. Palacios⁽²⁾ during the examination of the 1937–38 report, it may be stated that the *Mau* movement was in accord with the decision of the Mandatory Government to repatriate all Chinese labour. The reluctance of the Native Samoan to work on plantations, however, as had been stated by the accredited representative, could not be ascribed to any influence of the *Mau*, but to the inherent disinclination of the Samoan to undertake regular and prolonged work.

It is as yet too early to say whether the importation of other Polynesian labour will successfully meet the situation. There are indications that the initial lack of success of the first endeavour at recruitment from Niue may now be overcome as the labourers become accustomed to the conditions of work.

The *Mau-fou* has made no pronouncement on this subject. The Administration policy is to give full expression to the desire of the mandatory Government to provide an alternative Polynesian labour force, and to make necessary arrangements for safeguarding the interests of both the planters and the labourers.

In answer to Mr. Weaver's question⁽³⁾ regarding the number of Samoans employed in commerce, as domestic servants, &c., the number permanently so employed at the date of the 1936 census was approximately 260. In addition, there is a considerable amount of spasmodic employment such as stevedoring and casual contract work on plantations. The rates of pay and conditions vary. For instance, casual labourers employed at the Public Works Department and on shipping and copra handling receive 4s. a day. Domestic servants receive from £1 5s. to £3 per month with food and with or without quarters.

At the commencement of the year there were 326 Chinese coolies and 21 Chinese free settlers in the Territory. During the year there was one death, with the result that the Chinese population as at 31st March, 1939, was 346. The figure of 348 shown in the population statistics in Chapter XXIII includes two Chinese lepers at the Makogai Leper Station in Fiji.

XVI.—FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE.

The Administration has noted the request of M. Palacios⁽⁴⁾ for more detailed information regarding the missionary societies operating in the Territory, and subscribes to the remark of the accredited representative to the effect that it was a little difficult for the compilers of the report to know what more to say.

Previous reports have outlined generally the number of missionary societies, the number of their adherents, the fact that each mission engages in education and some medical work among its people, that all Samoans profess Christianity, that there is complete freedom of conscience, and that the relations between the missions and the Administration, as well as between the missions and their adherents, are and always have been of a satisfactory character.

⁽¹⁾ See minutes of thirty-fifth session of Permanent Mandates Commission, page 166.

⁽²⁾ See minutes of thirty-fifth session of Permanent Mandates Commission, page 167.

⁽³⁾ See minutes of thirty-fifth session of Permanent Mandates Commission, page 167.

⁽⁴⁾ See minutes of thirty-fifth session of Permanent Mandates Commission, page 168.