

UNITED NATIONS TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL



LIMITED

T/L.86
14 June 1950

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

DOCUMENTS
INDEXED

MASTER

Seventh session

Item 4 (a) of the agenda

16 JUN-1950

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EXAMINATION OF ANNUAL REPORTS: WESTERN SAMOA, YEAR ENDING 30 JUNE 1949

Implementation by the Administering Authority of recommendations of the Trusteeship Council

Note by the Secretariat: In accordance with resolution 128 (VI) of the Trusteeship Council, the Secretariat has prepared a special section on the implementation of the recommendations of the Trusteeship Council.

The information in this section is based on the annual report and the statements made by the representative and special representative of the Administering Authority during the discussion of the annual report in the Trusteeship Council.

I. Political advancement

The Council notes with satisfaction the reception given by the Samoan population to the constitutional changes introduced by the Samoa Amendment Act and expresses the hope that a loyal and sincere collaboration will give the recent reforms an opportunity to produce their full effects.

The Samoa Amendment Act, 1947, came into force on 10 March 1948. Both the Council of State and the Legislative Assembly began to function fully during the year 1948-49. In themselves they provide the principal means by which the other proposals for political, social and economic advancement announced in 1947 can be carried out.

The Council recommends that consideration be given to the introduction of a system of universal suffrage applicable to all inhabitants of Western Samoa to the end that the basis of representation in the Legislative Council may be progressively broadened.

The franchise in Samoa is confined to the matai, who constitute a little over 20 per cent of the males over fourteen years of age, or about one in four of adult males. The maintenance of this restriction does not indicate that either the Administering Authority or the Government of Western Samoa have not given consideration to the introduction of universal suffrage, as suggested by the

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Trusteeship Council at its fourth session.^{1/} It indicates their realization, on the contrary, that the introduction of universal suffrage at this stage would be incompatible with that respect for Samoan culture to which they are equally urged by the Trusteeship Council, a respect which they have always shown. The average Samoan still regards his matai as his proper representative in matters outside the family. To set this conviction at defiance, by the sudden introduction of adult suffrage, would not be to make the Fono of Faipule more representative, but less so. But it is realized by all concerned, including many Samoan leaders, that this situation is gradually changing, and will change still more. Economic and social changes are providing new opportunities for individuals to obtain distinction and the recognition of their right to participate in public affairs. The franchise will inevitably become more general. When the time comes for a change to be made, the Administering Authority will certainly not be found to be antagonistic to it; and it is considered that the Samoans themselves will gradually adopt this view.

It is considered that the improvement in the standard of education and the increased contact which Samoa now has with the outside world will lead the people of Samoa themselves towards the adoption of a democratic system of choosing their representatives in the legislative bodies. But the New Zealand Government is convinced that it would be entirely wrong to force on the Samoans any radical change in their customs.

The Council welcomes the policy of the Administering Authority of training the Samoans for the Civil Service so that they may gradually assume responsible administrative posts in the Territory.

The number of public servants on 31st March 1949, was 871. Of this total, 62 were seconded officers, 127 were local and other European officers and 682 were Samoans.

The Samoa Amendment Act of 1949 has also provided for the constitution of a Samoan Public Service Commission comprising a Commissioner and two assistant Commissioners, one of whom is to be a Samoan. Nominations for the office of Samoan Assistant Public Service Commissioner are required to be submitted by the Council of State, who has not yet made a nomination. The Public Service Commissioner commenced duty on 1 April 1950, and is at present engaged in

^{1/} Adopted at its fourth session (January-March 1949).

reviewing the organization of the public service of the Territory; he will as far as possible implement the policy of providing duties of increasing responsibility in the public service for the inhabitants of the Territory.

II. Economic advancement

The Council noted with satisfaction that the financial situation of the Territory is at present excellent. It is, however, aware that this prosperity is mainly due to abnormally high prices for copra and cocoa and is concerned with the possible repercussions of a fall in these prices on the economy of the Territory. The Council therefore recommends that the Administering Authority should continue to take all possible steps to protect the economy of the Territory against a fall in world prices by diversifying the production by introducing secondary industries into the Territory, and by any other measures that may be found possible.

The Council recommends that the Administering Authority intensify its efforts towards the development and utilization of the resources of the Territory in order to raise the standard of living of the indigenous inhabitants and requests the Administering Authority to elaborate an over-all plan for the economic development of Western Samoa.

A full examination of the problem of diversification will be made. A beginning has been made in industry diversification with the establishment of a factory to produce desiccated coconut. The New Zealand Reparation Estates Organization is also developing a dairy industry. Plans for a survey to determine the economic potential of the Trust Territory are at present being worked out. The extension of the roading system, open new lands, will provide an increased volume of production and offset to some degree any decrease in values. During the current year important changes have been made in the system of copra marketing. The time was propitious owing to the fact that the current contract with the Ministry of Food was due to expire on 31 December 1948, and that it was known that the Ministry was anxious to make a new contract for a long term. A revision of procedure was desired by which an authority in Western Samoa should negotiate the new contract in place of the New Zealand Government, which had acted on behalf of the Territory previously. It was also desired to establish a stabilization fund to provide some measure of protection for merchants and producers against fluctuations in prices. For this purpose the Copra Board Ordinance, 1948 was passed. It established a Copra Board composed of the following members: the Secretary to the Administration (Chairman), the Fautua, three representatives of Samoan producers, one representative of European producers, one representative of copra-buying interests, one representative of copra-exporting interests, and the Treasurer of Western Samoa (Secretary). The Board held its

first meeting on 23 December 1948. It has been given the sole right of exporting copra from the Territory.

(a) Preferential treatment

The Council takes note of the statement made by the representative of the Administering Authority that an inquiry regarding the existing preferential treatment of 11 per cent in favour of British goods is under way.

A Select Committee has been set up by the Legislative Assembly to investigate the question of retaining existing tariff preference in imports from British countries.

Plans for a survey to determine the economic potential of the Trust Territory are at present being worked out.

III. Social advancement

The Council urges the Administering Authority to intensify its efforts in the improvement of the health and social services in the Territory.

The Council requests the Administering Authority to consider the possibility of taking sample studies of the standard of living of the inhabitants.

The Annual Report for the year ending 31 March 1949, gives details of a comprehensive scheme which is being developed with the object of improving the health services of the Trust Territory. During that year a medical research team from New Zealand undertook a survey of the medical problems of the Trust Territory, and it is anticipated that a permanent research unit will be maintained there. During the early part of this year Dr. Muriel Bell, Senior Nutrition Officer of the New Zealand Medical Research Council, paid a visit to the Territory to study the blood protein levels in children, a subject bound up with questions of nutrition and the search for suitable weaning foods.

It is planned that sample studies of the standard of living of the inhabitants will be undertaken, if possible, in conjunction with the economic survey.

IV. Educational advancement

(a) Secondary and higher education

The Council welcomes the proposed establishment in the Trust Territory of a new secondary school with full time educational facilities and recommends to the Administering Authority that it intensify its effort to increase existing opportunities for higher education for the people of the Trust Territory.

The annual report referred to explains in detail the scheme which has been put into operation to provide extended secondary education facilities, while the expansion of the training college provided for under the scheme will supply trained teachers for the primary schools throughout the Trust Territory.

/(b) Compulsory

(b) Compulsory education

The Council urges the Administering Authority to continue its efforts towards increasing the number of Samoan teachers so that compulsory primary education as well as more extensive education in middle schools may become feasible as soon as possible.

Until there are sufficient trained teachers and Administration schools to provide facilities for the rapidly increasing population, it is considered impracticable to introduce a system of compulsory education. The Director of Education in Western Samoa has given the closest attention to the need for increasing the opportunities for Samcans to do the complete primary school course if they wished. Two steps have been taken. The pupils from standards five and six in the Samoan School at Malifa and the European School at Leifiifi have been placed in the new intermediate school in Apia where both Samcans and Europeans are to be given a more specialized opportunity of studying the curriculum of standards five and six. Instruction will be in English. This problem, in relation to village schools, has always been taken into account in the plans of the Director of Education. Whereas, some years before, village schools achieved only the equivalent of standard two in New Zealand schools, the level has recently risen to that of standard four. It was recognized that even that was not sufficient, and two Samoan teachers have been given a special course in the central institutions in Apia and placed in charge of two district schools, one in Upolu and the other in Savaii, where students who are qualified are sent to proceed through standards five and six.

V. Social Advancement

(a) Cultural development

The Council considers that the Administering Authority should further encourage the development of the national culture and the true national art of the indigenous population.

The Samoan Administration is concerned with the preservation of the national culture of the Territory, and is giving it every encouragement.
