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EXAMINATION OF ANNUAL REPORTS:

WESTERN SAMOA, year ending 31 MARCH 1949

Report of the Drafting Committee on Annual Reports

PART III

OBSERVATIONS OF MEMBERS OF THE TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL

REPRESENTING THEIR INDIVIDUAL OPINIONS ONLY

I. GENERAL

The representative of the United Kingdom commended the Administering Authority for faithfully fulfilling all its Trusteeship obligations.

The representative of China was gratified to learn that steady progress had been made in the administration of the Territory during the year under review. He believed that the Administering Authority deserved the congratulations and commendation of the Trusteeship Council in many respects.

The representative of Iraq was gratified to note that progress had been made in Western Samoa during the past year and that the Administering Authority had fulfilled its obligations under the Trusteeship Agreement.

II. POLITICAL ADVANCEMENT

Samoa Amendment Act, 1947

The representative of the United States of America pointed out that the Report covered the first year of experience under the provisions of the Samoa Amendment Act, 1947, which embodied most of the substantial recommendations contained in the Visiting Mission's report. He noted that while the Report was indicative of the beneficial effects of the changes introduced by the Samoa Amendment Act it was still too early to make a final evaluation of the results of these changes.

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Status of the Territory

The representative of the Dominican Republic recommended that the Samoa Amendment Act, 1947 and 1949 concerning the status of the Territory be amended by deleting any reference to the Samoa Act 1921, in order to clarify that the new constitution derives from the International Trusteeship System which is different from the former international Mandates System to which the original Samoa Act 1921 referred. He suggested that appropriate legislation be taken with respect to this matter.

Legislative Assembly

The representative of the United Kingdom regarded the establishment of the Council of State and of the Legislative Assembly with an elected majority in accordance with the new constitutional arrangements introduced in 1948 as a notable achievement.

The representative of the United States of America commended the growing participation by Samoan members of the Legislative Assembly in the work of the government through the medium of standing committees, particularly in the preparation of the annual budget. This was reassuring evidence of the policy of the Administering Authority to afford ever-increasing opportunity for the indigenous peoples to develop their capacities and to gain widening experience in the very difficult art of self-government. He expressed great interest in subsequent reports in order to learn of continued progress along these lines.

The representative of Iraq was gratified to learn that in the last year the membership of the Legislative Assembly had been increased by one elected Samoan member.

The representative of the Philippines, referring to the reserve legislative power of the New Zealand government, expressed satisfaction with the explanation given by the Special Representative regarding the scope and implications of these reservations. However, he urged that in the future the Reports devote more space and attention to these reservations and he hoped that the reservations would not in any way operate to impair the economy of the Territory, much less stand in the way of the development of further autonomy.

Suffrage

The representative of the United States of America noted that some progress had been made toward the further adoption of democratic political institutions

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when the Fono of Faipule, for the first time, employed a secret ballot in electing a member of the Legislative Council. He felt sure that this indication of the gradual adoption by the Samoan people of democratic elective techniques would be given further encouragement by the Administering Authority.

The representative of Iraq while recognizing that universal suffrage was not an easy operation to undertake, especially in a society that was just feeling its way in political growth, felt that the Administering Authority should keep in mind the very high desirability of introducing universal suffrage. He felt that the Council could express the hope that in an evolutionary manner - not in a slow manner, but in a steady or perhaps quick way - the Administration would introduce universal suffrage in the Territory, if possible.

Status of the Inhabitants

The representative of the Philippines felt that the existing differentiation between Samoan and European, although not now a problem, is susceptible of complications in the future. While recognizing the complexity of the problem and the necessity of reconciling opposing interests, he expressed the hope that a solution to this problem would be found in the near future whereby the rights of the Samoans would be preserved, while at the same time the acquired interests of the Europeans would be amply protected. He submitted that if there should be a conflict between the rights of Europeans to a certain economic status in the Territory and the rights of the Samoans to their national patrimony, the latter should prevail.

The representative of Iraq agreed with statements by other representatives that the desirability of the lessening of racial barriers in the Territory should be impressed upon the Administration.

The representative of the Dominican Republic suggested that the Administering Authority take immediate steps, together with the Legislative Assembly of Western Samoa, to end any possible confusion or lack of preciseness regarding the matter of nationality, and to affirm that nationality status in general will not lead to restrictions of individual rights.

Administration

The representative of China expressed the hope that steps would be taken to improve the qualifications of Samoan professional and technical men, so that the present differentiation in the remuneration paid such men and their European colleagues may gradually be reduced with a view to its total elimination.

/Judicial

Judicial Organization

The representative of the Philippines believed that it would rebound to the well-being of the people of the Trust Territory and to the progress of their Government if the judiciary were to be given, in due time, a permanence of tenure. He recognized the difficulty of effecting political or social changes with respect to the judiciary, but he urged that even if custom and tradition should militate against certain constitutional and social changes, efforts should be made to overcome these obstacles.

III. ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT

General

The representative of Belgium noted the extremely fortunate economic and financial situation in the Territory, pointing out that its budget of half a million pounds and its reserve fund of £642,000 for a population of 70,000 inhabitants compared favourably with many countries of high civilization.

Copra Board

The representative of the United Kingdom noted the formation of the Copra Board which has as its objective the establishment of a stabilization fund. He noted also that the Board includes representatives of Samoan producers. He thought that this was an encouraging feature of the year under review.

Diversification of Industry

The representative of China, noting what has already been done by the Administration in the direction of a diversification of industry, urged that the question should continue to receive the closest attention of the Administering Authority because of its vital importance to the general economic advancement of the Territory.

The representative of the United States of America expressed satisfaction to learn that one of the principal concerns of the economic survey which the Administering Authority plans to make of the entire Territory will be to explore directions and practical possibilities for further diversification. He felt that further diversification of the economy of the Territory was of outstanding importance if the increasing demands for various social, educational and economic facilities are to be met.

Referring to the remarks of the representative of the United States of America on this subject the Special Representative of the Administering Authority stated that the plans for a survey to determine the economic potential of the of the territory and the work of the South Pacific Commission in its economic branches might be regarded as the preliminary steps for the over-all plans for the economic development of the Territory. The question of what industries might best be developed in the future depended largely upon the operation of this economic plan. The establishment of the Department of Agriculture and the proposed census of food and agricultural resources to be taken under the auspices of the FAO in 1950 might supply additional information.

/In addition

In addition the representative of the Administering Authority said it had to be borne in mind that the Territory was very small and its size did substantially restrict the directions in which diversification was possible. Another point was that because of the lava problem, scarcely any of the soil of Samoa was arable. There was the further difficulty that the people were not wage slaves, and did not need to work unless they wished. He agreed readily that when it was a question of producing articles in Samoa which contributed to the welfare of the Samoans, every possible effort should be made to do so. There, however, one came up against the conservatism of the people themselves.

In 1928, when he had been responsible for the welfare of Western Samoa, he had urged the need for diversification. Various attempts had been made, and he himself had been present at the birth of the banana trade, which had been a conspicuous success despite many early difficulties, among them the necessity of purchasing a ship. That led to another point. If articles were produced for export, transport had to be provided. Samoa was a small territory and could not maintain a shipping line. The banana trade had benefited Samoa, but when a dried banana project had been launched in order to overcome the shipping problem it had proved a failure. In a small community, with a small supply of labour, costs had to be high in comparison with those in other places where labour was more plentiful, and it became economically impossible to compete in many cases. The production of ylangylang, a perfume base, had been tried out without success, and cotton had been a complete failure. An effort to produce pepsin from the papaya had also come to nothing. The production of desiccated cocoanut, however, had proved possible, and was very beneficial to the Territory. The raising of cattle had been attempted, and it had even been suggested that a meat canning factory should be set up, but that had not proved a commercial proposition. Rubber had been introduced, but when its price had dropped it had fallen out of production.

Taxation

The representative of the United States of America noted with interest the report of the Officer of the New Zealand Land and Income Tax Department with respect to taxation reforms in Western Samoa. He also noted that an officer of this Department had received a special appointment as Collector of Customs in the Territory in order to study further the application of the terms of this report. He felt that it would be of great interest to the Council to

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receive copies of this report and to be informed of any taxation reforms that may have resulted therefrom.

Finances

The representative of China was gratified to find that the finances of the Territory continue to be sound and noted with interest the decision of the Administering Authority to reduce the accumulated surplus, devoting the large sum thus released to necessary developmental works in the economic and social fields. The representative of China expressed the hope that the conservative estimate tendered by the Special Representative of the financial capacity of the Administering Authority to expand the principal social services of health and education was still subject to change.

IV. SOCIAL ADVANCEMENT

General

The representative of China stated that everything should be done to extend and improve the work as much and as soon as possible in the services of health and education which are of paramount importance to the general advancement of the Territory. Recognizing that everything that has been seen and heard at this Council in regard to what has already been accomplished has been admirable, the representative of China suggested that the splendid record of the Administering Authority along these lines and the growing interest which has been demonstrated by the indigenous inhabitants in the enterprises in question, raise new hopes and warrant further efforts towards their expansion and perfection.

Health

The representative of the United States of America found it is encouraging to note that it is proposed to equip two additional mobile clinics this year. He wondered if it might not be useful to consider the possibility of similarly equipping a boat as a field unit to reach localities where at present no roads exist.

The representative of Iraq commended the Administering Authority for the impressive progress made in the field of health. He pointed out that there certainly was room for more progress and that the Administering Authority would want to make as much progress as it could in this field. He suggested that the Administration undertake one comprehensive sweeping programme to initiate and continue reforms in fighting the disease of tuberculosis.

Social Legislation

The representative of the Philippines expressed the hope that social legislation should be made part and parcel of the programme of the government of the Territory. While it is true that by custom and tradition, workingmen of the Territory are entitled to certain social privileges, it is important that such privileges should be translated into actual legislation.

The representative of Iraq felt that despite the small number of labourers in the Territory the Administering Authority should introduce at least elementary social legislation as soon as possible.

Status of Women

The representative of the Dominican Republic congratulated the Administering Authority on its efforts towards the elimination of any differentiation between the rights of men and women.

Radio and Press

The representative of the United States of America noting the beneficial effects of the expanding use of radio consider the advisability of supplementing the radio broadcasts by encouraging press and publications adapted to local needs.

Referring to the suggestion of the representative of the United States of America to supplement broadcasting with press or other publications, the Special Representative of the Administering Authority presented to the Trusteeship Council a draft form of a new newspaper which it was hoped to have published in the Territory in the course of the next three or four months. It will be published by a commercial undertaking in English and Samoan with news interesting the respective community. It will be the policy of the new paper to publish all reasonable communications sent by third persons. Arrangements are now being made for new printing machinery to be imported.

The representative of the Philippines commended the harnessing of radio to the education and political needs of the Territory and recalled to the consideration of the Administering Authority one of the observations and recommendations of UNESCO with respect to the employment of radio and visual information devices in the furtherance of popular education.

V. EDUCATIONAL ADVANCEMENT

The representative of the Dominican Republic recognized that the implementation of long-range plan for the development of education implied considerable economic sacrifices but he considered a healthy policy which must not be detained or stopped by common arguments since it is in the development of education that the hope for autonomy and complete independence of the Trust Territory were to be found. He noted that the Report does not mention whether education is to be in English, Samoan, or lingua franca. He felt that the Trusteeship Council should be informed of specific details giving a clearer picture of the educational programme.

Answering the enquiry of the representative of the Dominican Republic concerning the use of languages in schools the Special Representative emphasized that there was a widespread feeling among the Samoans that they cannot make progress unless they know English. Following the policy that the preservation and development of the indigenous language must be fully respected the Administering Authority reached the decision that Samoan will continue to be used as the medium of instruction for junior classes, and English for senior classes. In the Samoan village schools, the teaching will be in Samoan with lessons in English. In the new district schools which will continue to teach in Samoan substantially, greater emphasis shall be placed on the teaching of English.

The representative of the United States of America felt that the Administering Authority had made commendable progress as witnessed by the expansion of the teacher training programme, the opening of a night school for Adult Education, the plans for Samoa College, and the other programmes having educational aspects which have already been mentioned. He indicated awareness of the difficulties of further expansion of educational facilities within the limits of the Territory's present financial structure, but he hoped that the economic survey of the Territory to be undertaken will have the effect of making possible continued expansion in the Territory's economy, thereby making possible further increases in education and other social services.

The representative of Iraq, noting the enlargement of schools and the heartening attendance, commended the Administration for the progress in the field of education. He called attention to the many useful ways in which radio could be employed in educating all the people of the Territory. He noted that the Administration should avoid the modern curse in radio broadcasting of commercial advertisements.
