

generally, in the near future, although I estimate only for a good average year in 1924 owing to the fact that Samoa is still suffering from the effects of the aforementioned excessive importations, and consequently the import trade is likely to be below normal for probably the whole of the present year.

## II. NATIVE AFFAIRS.

### POLICY.

The policy of the Government to give primary consideration to the interests of the Native race in all matters of administration is being strictly carried out, and is evidently being appreciated by the Natives themselves, as shown by the report of the Secretary for Native Affairs.

Without absolute confidence in their Government the Natives will not readily respond to instructions given by its officials in their own interests. They prefer their Native customs, and thereby retard their own development. Events comprising the history of Western Samoa have not been conducive to promoting unity amongst the Natives in support of their Government. The confusion which reigned prior to the three Powers assuming control in 1889, the unsettled conditions prevailing during the latter regime (the change of Government in 1899 and again in 1914), followed by four years and a half of uncertainty as to which flag this Territory would be under after the war, also the change from military to civil administration under a mandate granted by the League of Nations in 1920, have all had a disturbing influence on the minds of the Natives, making them feel that the Government was without any fixed policy on Native interests, and that changes might recur any day without their having any voice in their own affairs.

The Native leaders have informed me that these past events in their history created a suspicion in their minds that their country was being exploited, and that the Natives—the real owners of the soil—were not receiving the consideration to which they were entitled.

Recent experience in dealing with the Natives has shown that they desire permanency in the existing Government, and appreciate its sympathetic treatment of their problems. I am pleased to be able to report that they are responding gradually but surely to the gospel of self-help, which is being instilled into them by all Government officials.

### DISTRICT COUNCILS.

The custom of the Natives in making appeals to the Government to do many things for them which they could do equally well for themselves, such as minor repairs to roads, sanitary improvements, &c., is a practice which, if allowed to continue, will retard the object of the Government to educate the Natives to control their own affairs. To obviate this it is proposed to establish District Councils to deal with local matters in each district, such as sanitation, compulsory education of children, maintenance of roads and bridges, compulsory planting and development of plantations, allocation of land, increasing production, remodelling of villages, &c.

### NATIVE LANDS.

Great satisfaction has been expressed by the representatives of the Native race (the Faipules) at the decision of the New Zealand Government not to sell its Crown Estates lands, but to temporarily dispose of them by lease in order that these lands may be available in the future for the Natives should they increase in numbers to such an extent as to ultimately require additional land for settlement.

In considering the future requirements of land by the Natives it must be borne in mind that the present generation of Samoans will not establish new villages inland, where there is plenty of room for settlement. They insist on living quite close to the sea-shore, and would ridicule as inferiors those who lived in the bush. There are evidences of the previous existence of many old village settlements in the bush at some distance from the sea-coast, indicating that in their early history the majority of the Samoan Natives lived there, and not, as they do now, practically on the beach. From stories which have been handed down it is concluded that superstition and danger of being kidnapped by invaders were responsible for this custom.

To-day it would be advantageous to some of the Natives to go and live inland near good water-supplies and within easy reach of their plantations, but their strong resentment to ridicule as "bush Natives" prevents me from effecting any change in this direction and thereby simplifying difficulties in providing land for expansion of some villages on the northern shores of Upolu. For a distance of twenty-five miles of the most thickly populated area of the north coast of Upolu—viz., from Letoga to Mulifanua—the boundaries of either European or Crown Estates land extend for practically fifteen miles either on the sea-front or so close to the sea that villages have no room for expansion. As the Natives must, in accordance with their communal customs, reside in their own territorial or political district, and also will not live inland, provision must now be made by acquiring land for expansion for those villages which require it, in the above-mentioned area.

There are large areas of undeveloped land in Samoa, but every bit of it is owned communistically by a chief or district, and no Natives from one district where land is scarce can go to a district where it is plentiful and acquire it for their own use. Therefore, during the existing stage of social development of the Natives sufficient land for their plantations must be provided for each village in its own political territory. This would constitute a difficult problem for me in dealing with the request of