

Notes on Tropical Storms and other Disturbances, 1932-33.

October, 1932. Strong east winds prevailed in Samoa and Tonga and the neighbouring seas during the first few days of the month. They were associated with high readings of the barometer in the area lying to the south of these islands.

November, 1932. Torrential rain fell at Apia amounting to as much as 10 in. in one day of twenty-four hours.

January, 1933. Gales from north and north-west occurred in Samoa during the first week. They were associated with low readings of the barometer in the area lying between Samoa and Fiji.

February, 1933. Tropical cyclones of fair intensity visited Tonga and the Cook Islands.

XX. LAND-TENURE.

Under the Samoa Act, 1921, all land is legally—

- (a) Crown land, vested in the Crown free from Native title or any estate in fee-simple, of which there are (including New Zealand Reparation Estates) 103,630 acres; or
- (b) European land, being land acquired (mainly prior to 1900) for an estate in fee-simple, of which there are 40,000 acres; or
- (c) Native land, being land vested in the Crown as trustee of the beneficial owners thereof, and held by the Crown subject to Native title—*i.e.*, Native land communally owned, of which there are 581,370 acres.

Titles to Crown land, European land, and European interests in Native land (leases) are registered by the Administration. Titles to Native land, when in dispute, are adjudicated upon by the Land and Titles Commission referred to in Chapter X of this report, and determined in accordance with the customs and usages of the Samoan race.

Usurious contracts with Natives are unenforceable at law and Native land is incapable of being taken in execution for the payment of the debts of a Samoan on his decease or insolvency.

Generally, alienation of Native land is prohibited, save an alienation or disposition in favour of the Crown. Provision has been made for sale of Native land in the Apia town area, and His Majesty may grant a lease of Native land for a period not exceeding forty years, but in each instance the grant is made only if the Administration is satisfied that the transaction is in accordance with the desires and in the interest of the Native owners and in conformity with the public interest.

Although large areas in the interior of each of the two main islands are incapable of cultivation, there is more than ample Native land available for all requirements of the indigenous population.

XXI. FORESTS AND AGRICULTURE.

FORESTS.

The mountainous interior, comprising by far the greater portion of the area of both principal islands, is completely covered with virgin native forest. The Territory has been visited on occasion by representatives of milling interests, who have formed the opinion that the indigenous forest has insufficient millable trees to the acre to be profitable, whilst afforestation with exotic species is rather discouraged by the steep and ravine-cleft nature of the country.

On European plantations teak is planted in a small way, but quite successfully, for general utility.

AGRICULTURE.

The circumstances of the Territory do not warrant the maintenance of a separate Administration Department of Agriculture, but there is inspection of all produce exported.

Copra is the staple product of the Territory; it is produced approximately 75 per cent. by Natives, and the output of the New Zealand Reparation Estates accounts for roughly two-thirds of the balance. Exports for the five years 1926-30 averaged 13,026 tons. There is considerable fluctuation in local stocks held between shipments, and for this reason records are kept of Native production as distinct from export, as indicated in the following:

| Year. | Exported. Tons. | Native Production. Tons. |
|--------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1930 | 12,285 | 10,514 |
| 1931 | 11,062 | 7,614 |
| 1932 | 10,879 | 11,103 |

There were practically no local stocks at the end of 1931, but a very heavy carry-over at the close of 1932.

The figures above appear at first sight to be promising, and reflect improved local prices during 1932 as compared with 1931, but in March, 1933, falling overseas values again brought local prices down to the level of 1931, and the position is uncertain.

Cocoa is produced in Western Samoa primarily by Europeans, and is of very high quality, being a standardized hybrid of *Criollo* and *Forastero*, but with the *Criollo* predominating, and in a recent report of the Imperial Economic Committee on Cocoa, which classified the world's production into three broad divisions as to quality, Samoan was included in the finest.

Export during the five years 1926-30 averaged 758 tons, and in 1932 was 825 tons.