

In the Mandated Territory of Western Samoa I had opportunity of making myself acquainted with all sections of the population, and of studying the system of administration generally. The evidence of progress in every direction is remarkable. The satisfaction displayed by the Natives in their conditions of livelihood, their ever-increasing efforts to improve their land, their interest in sanitation and education, and the complete confidence which they express in the Administration are most gratifying. I am firmly convinced that the Territory is being governed under a wise, just, and far-seeing policy, and in accordance with the best traditions of British rule.

I also paid visits to Pago Pago (in American Samoa), to the Tongan Group, and to His Excellency the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific at Suva. I trust these visits may have been useful in promoting and maintaining friendly relations with those who are associated in administering the affairs of the Native races in the Pacific.

I have also had the opportunity of visiting various parts of the Dominion, and have been deeply touched by the strong Imperial sentiment which was manifested, not only in the large centres of population, but equally in the most remote parts. The generally prosperous conditions prevailing conveyed to me the impression that this Dominion is by application and industry rapidly recovering from its post-war difficulties.

During the year a battleship squadron of the United States Fleet visited New Zealand, and the friendly relations which were manifested between the officers and men of the squadron and the citizens of the Dominion must prove beneficial in promoting mutual good will and understanding between the United States of America and this Dominion. I also welcomed, on behalf of the people of New Zealand, His Majesty's Australian Squadron, the Japanese training-ship "Iwate," and the French sloop "Cassiopée."

The arrival of His Majesty's cruiser "Diomede" to form part of the New Zealand naval unit aroused widespread interest, and, while the addition of this cruiser means an increase in our expenditure on naval defence, my Advisers are of the opinion that still more must be done before New Zealand can claim to be bearing her fair share of Imperial naval defence.

The New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition, which I opened at Dunedin in November last, proved a remarkable success from every point of view. The results must prove beneficial to the whole of New Zealand. The Exhibition should procure more adequate recognition of the value of our industries, both primary and secondary, and also produce good results in promoting trade within the Empire.

During the month of February I visited the Waiapu district, and was met by a very large gathering of the Native race on the occasion of the consecration of a Maori carved church erected by the Ngatiporou Tribe in memory of their sons who fell in the Great War. I noted with great satisfaction the expression given to the deep loyalty to the Throne which animates the Maori race of New Zealand. I was also much impressed with the earnest desire of the Maori people to improve their lands, and to promote industries which will enable the rising generation to find adequate scope for its energies and aspirations.

My Native Minister, in accordance with the provisions of section 29 of the Native Land Amendment and Native Land Claims Adjustment Act of last session, entered into negotiations with the Natives for an agreement in respect of fishing rights in Taupo waters, and it is considered that the arrangements which were decided upon will be satisfactory to all concerned.

Early in this year the Right Hon. Sir Robert Stout retired from the office of Chief Justice. During his long and illustrious career he rendered eminent public service to this Dominion, and carries with him in his retirement the good will of the whole community. The Hon. C. P. Skerrett has been appointed to fill the vacancy.

The Hon. Sir James Allen, who for six years has filled, with conspicuous zeal and ability, the position of High Commissioner for New Zealand in London, retires on the 31st July next. The Hon. Sir James Parr has been appointed to succeed him.