

SAMOA.

Reigning King.—Malietao Laupepa, restored November 9, 1889.

Group of 14 volcanic islands in the South Pacific (about 14° S. and 172° W.), the chief of which are Savaii, Upolu, and Tutuila. At a Samoan conference at Berlin in 1889, at which Great Britain, Germany, and the United States were represented, an Act was signed (June 14) guaranteeing the neutrality of the islands in which the citizens of the three signatory Powers have equal rights of residence, trade, and personal protection. The three Powers recognise the independence of the Samoan Government, and the free rights of the natives to elect their chief or king, and choose the form of government according to their own laws and customs. A supreme court is established, consisting of one judge, who is styled Chief Justice of Samoa. To this Court are referred (1) all civil suits concerning real property situated in Samoa; (2) all civil suits of any kind between natives and foreigners, or between foreigners of different nationalities; (3) all crimes and offences committed by natives against foreigners, or committed by such foreigners as are not subject to any consular jurisdiction. All future alienation of lands is prohibited, with certain specified exceptions. A local administration is provided for the municipal district of Apia.

Apia, the only town, in the island of Upolu is the capital and centre of government.

Area, 1,701 square miles; population, about 34,000, of which 16,600 in Upolu, 12,500 in Savaii, 3,750 in Tutuila. The natives are Polynesians. There were in 1895, 203 British subjects, about 120 Germans, 26 Americans, 26 French, 25 of other nationalities. The natives are all Christians (Protestant and Roman Catholic), and schools are attached to the churches. In 1894 the commission appointed to investigate titles to land alleged to have been purchased from the natives completed its labours. The area claimed exceeded the area of the Samoan group by more than 700,000 acres. The commission confirmed to Germans about 75,000 acres, to British 36,000, and to Americans 21,000, but much land has since changed hands. Revenue from taxes and customs duties in 1894 7,076*l.* The taxes were all contributed by the white residents, no attempt being made to collect the native capitation tax of 4*s.* per head. The trade is in the hands of German and British firms. Imports, 1894, 90,278*l.*; 1895, 83,763*l.* (53,197*l.* from Great Britain and Colonies); exports, 1894, 63,295*l.*; 1895, 51,351*l.* Chief imports, haberdashery, kerosene, lumber, galvanised roofing, tinned provisions, and salt beef; only export, copra: 1894, 6,536 tons; 1895, 5,048 tons. During 1892 many acres were planted with cacao, with a view to export. In 1895, 90 vessels of 87,237 tons (23 of 33,386 tons American, and 39 of 44,393 tons British), excluding men-of-war and coasting vessels, entered the port of Apia. The mail steamers between Sydney, Auckland, and San Francisco call at Apia each way every four weeks, and the Union Steamship Company of New Zealand send two steamers monthly, one from Sydney and one from Auckland. New Zealand is reached in five days, Sydney in eight.

The Berlin Treaty made the American coinage the standard of exchange in Samoa, but English gold and silver are almost exclusively in circulation at the rate of 4*s.* to the dollar.

Consul and Deputy Commissioner.—T. B. Cusack-Smith.

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