

# TUVALU

*Capital:* Funafuti

*Population:* 7,900 (1973)

**HISTORY.** Formerly the Ellice Islands, a British Protectorate since 1892.

**AREA AND POPULATION.** Tuvalu (formerly the Ellice Islands) lie between 5° 30' and 11° S. lat. and 176° and 180° E. long. and comprise Nanumea, Nanumanga, Niutao, Nui, Vaitupu, Nukufetau, Funafuti (administrative centre), Nukulaelae and Nurakita. Population (census 1973) 7,900. Area approximately 9½ sq. miles (24 sq. km). The population is of a Polynesian race.

**CONSTITUTION AND GOVERNMENT.** On the recommendation of a Commissioner, appointed by the British Government, to consider requests that the island group be separated from the Gilbert Islands, a referendum was held in 1974. There was a large majority in favour of separation and this took place in Oct. 1975.

The Constitution provides for a Chief Minister and 2 other Ministers to be elected from among the 12 elected members of the House of Assembly, for which general elections took place on 29 Aug. 1977. The Cabinet, chaired by the Commissioner, consists of the 3 ministers and 2 *ex officio* members, the Attorney-General and the Financial Secretary, who are also *ex officio* members of the House of Assembly. Independence was achieved on 1 Oct. 1978. Local Government services are provided by an elected Island Council on each of the 8 atolls.

*Governor-General:* Penitala Fiatau Teo.

*Chief Minister:* Toalipi Lauti.

*Minister for Commerce and Natural Resources:* Tumu Sione.

*Minister for Social Services:* Tau'i Finikaso.

*National flag:* Light blue with the Union Jack in the canton, and 9 gold stars in the fly arranged in the same pattern as the 9 islands.

**BUDGET.** In 1979 the budget envisaged expenditure of \$A2m.; \$A750,000 provided by UK by a grant-in-aid.

**INDUSTRY.** Experiments and surveys were being undertaken in 1976 to see if the copra and fishing industries could be established.

**COMMUNICATIONS.** Tuvalu is linked to the outside world by Air Pacific HS748 which operates weekly, arriving on Wednesday and leaving on Thursday. Inter-island communication is undertaken by a ship which takes cargo and passengers.

## EDUCATION AND WELFARE

**Education.** In 1976 there was 1 secondary school jointly administered by the Government and the Church. In addition there were 8 primary schools with (1977) 1,558 pupils run by Island Councils and subsidized by the central government.

**Health.** In 1976 there was 1 central hospital with 36 beds situated at Funafuti. There were 3 doctors.

## DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIVE

OF GREAT BRITAIN IN TUVALU

*High Commissioner:* Viscount Dunrossil (resides in Suva).