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Britain is not the only country in the Commonwealth which has dependencies. Which of the Dominions have colonies, protectorates or mandates to look after, and what problems do these involve?

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After the first World War territories formally owned by Germany were assigned to various Allied countries, not as possessions for their own use, but as "Mandates" to be developed for the benefit of the inhabitants. This policy is now re-emphasised under United Nations. "The chief purpose of trusteeship," says the Charter, "is to promote the political, economic social and

educational advancement of the inhabitants, and their progressive development towards self-government or independence." The words indicate the nature and magnitude of the problems, though these vary in different territories, and are those which Britain and her Dominions have always tried to solve.

The League of Nations granted Mandates to three British Dominions: South-West Africa to the Union of South Africa, the territory of New Guinea to Australia and Western Samoa to New Zealand. Besides the mandates however, Australia and New Zealand have other dependencies, which, though not subjected to supervision, are administered with the same sense of trusteeship.

To be responsible for the welfare of a savage and undeveloped country is an onerous task. The natives may be wild and fierce or comparatively mild; their forms of government may be crude or very suitable. The administration must study these factors, and tactfully repress or encourage the native habits. The country itself has to be surveyed, its potentialities discovered and developed. Here again native characteristics may smooth or create difficulties. Some races make good workmen, others are unable to settle down to a life of steady work. In this case the importation of labourers may be required, but this raises another problem, for the newcomers cannot be

permitted to oust the natives from the ultimate control of their own land. This must still be brought about by the slow processes of education, and social work. Unfortunately disease is rife, and control difficult. Medical services must be established, insanitary conditions displaced, and the natives educated to assist themselves. The whole situation requires knowledge, courage, enterprise, combined with tact and great patience.

Former German South-west Africa was granted to the Union of South Africa and has since been administered as an integral part of the Union. The territories are mutually dependant, strategically and economically, so that South Africa maintains that she has every right to annex the mandate. She also shows evidence that the people support this action. United Nations feel that a subject people may not be able to express their opinions freely in such a case, but others argue that the three hundred and sixty thousand natives - Hottentots, Hereros, Ovambos and bushmen - are not capable of giving a considered verdict. They are still politically undeveloped. They are represented in the Union House of Assembly by Europeans, and districts are ruled by Magistrates and Native Affairs Officials. Difficulties arise from the fact that two million whites are out-numbered by one hundred and fifty million blacks. General Smuts has said that the inevitable

and right idea, behind United Nations is that of human equality that South Africa intends to conform to principles of justice and fair play of which no one need be ashamed.

Australia's dependencies include the Mandate of New Guinea, the Territory of Papua and Norfolk Island. The Bismark Archipelago, the Admiralty Islands and the Northern Solomon Islands are included in the mandate issued by the League of Nations in 1920.

There are two great problems in New Guinea. One concerns its economic welfare. New Guinea is one of the most mountainous islands in the world, the natives ^{among} are the fiercest, and the climate one of the hottest, so that great physical difficulties hinder the opening up of the country. In the first place they impede exploration so that large areas are still unknown. Their possibilities are still to be discovered. Near the coast where access is easy development is more advanced. Coconut and cocoa plantations are well established, and experimental crops are grown. An earnest endeavour is made to discover the most suitable localities for different products. A great difficulty is experienced in the construction of roads and other communications. In the case of the mining industry, this is most important, the mines being far in the interior. Air travel, though expensive, is the only solution. The mandate has few good harbours and its

distance from markets discourages the cultivation of crops, which might otherwise be profitable. There is no labour problem, for the natives, though wild, make good workmen, and Asiatics are also imported to work in the mines.

The second task is that of improving the life of the natives. On plantations and in mines their welfare must be safeguarded. The Administration has to wage war with the many tropical diseases and train the natives in civilised life. In this respect those returning to their homes from mines and plantations are of assistance. Missions also co-operate in school and hospital work. To overcome the difficulty of many social types and languages, Pidgin English is used.

Papua adjoining New Guinea has similar difficulties to overcome. The character of the country and people are generally the same, but the soil is poorer over larger areas. The country has been handicapped by this. Here again experimental crops have had to be grown, rubber and coconuts being found the most suitable. Oil also has been discovered, and this it is hoped will form the foundation of a new industry. Since the Japanese invasion, the country has been faced with the task of re-organisation, and re-construction, this is also true in New Guinea. Like his neighbour, the Papuan is an apt and intelligent workman. The only education provided, is in the Mission schools, where

English must be taught as the confusion of dialects is a great hindrance to the Administration.

Neither in New Guinea nor in Papua, have the natives any system of self-government. Even the native chiefs have little power over their followers. Every man is his own master. Therefore the administration has the task of developing the natives sense of community responsibility. So far they have been able to achieve little, except in the Police Force. The natives are very keen, and it is hoped that they will form the core for an expanding self-government.

Portfolk Island, the Pearl of the Pacific, lies nine hundred and fifty miles north-east of Sydney. The eight hundred inhabitants live in a beautiful fertile land, with a mild and healthy climate. All fruits and vegetables grow abundantly, after easy cultivation. With no taxes to pay, no public service ~~called~~ ^{except} fifteen days service on the roads each year, no problems save the improvement of his live-stock and the shipping of his passion fruit and oranges, the Islander should be perfectly happy but alas some pine for civilisation, some wish it away, and some even ask for a change of administration!

Pauru twenty-six miles south of the equator is a complete contrast. The climate is hot and the soil barren. The problem of native welfare involves compulsory education, strict care for

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their health, and encouragement of agriculture. Half its population are Chinese, engaged under three year contracts to mine phosphates which are quarried in the interior and transported from the coast to ships on carrier belts across vast cantilevers. Here another difficulty arises, for the area is very stormy, and ships must often wait at sea for days or even weeks. During the war the cantilevers were destroyed by the Japanese and it will be several years before full production can be shipped. The island was mandated to Britain, Australia and New Zealand but the Administration has been committed to Australia.

In Antarctica, Australia claims a tract of land adjoining the Ross Dependency belonging to New Zealand. Whaling is carried on extensively in these waters, but the secrets of the ice-bound wastes are still to be discovered.

The Dominion of New Zealand has various small island dependencies. To the south lie the Auckland Islands, uninhabited, but holding a well-stocked relief depot. Campbell Islands, the Antipodes, and the Bounty Islands are also uninhabited. The Chatham Islands five hundred miles east of Christchurch are inhabited by about seven hundred half-casts. Their occupations are farming and fishing. It is an isolated, rather backward community. Ships call monthly, weather permitting, and planes fly over, when an urgent

call is sent. The need of the island is for improvement of its primitive and lonely condition.

The Kermadecs, of which only Sunday Island is habitable, lie six hundred miles north of Auckland. Several attempts have been made to establish settlements, but though the island is beautiful and fertile, all have been defeated by its isolation. Its chief importance now is as a meteorological station.

The Cook Islands are inhabited by attractive and intelligent natives who make excellent workmen. They are encouraged to grow small plantations of oranges, bananas and tomatoes. Unfortunately much of the land has been impoverished, and replanting on a large scale is necessary. Besides being industrious the natives are well-advanced in self-government, and the native Federal Parliament and local Island Councils need only the guidance of the Resident Commissioner to manage their own affairs. The climate is healthy, and diseases, under the careful attention of the Health Department, are gradually disappearing.

Piue is situated five hundred and eighty miles west of Rarotonga. The natives are very industrious, are keen traders, and being of a roving disposition, often go as labourers to other islands and are much in demand as sailors. As in the Cook Islands the Commissioner's problems are to guide the people in the control of their local affairs, and to develop the resources of the island.

The most interesting, because the most advanced of New Zealand's dependencies

is the Mandate of Western Samoa. The natives are attractive, friendly, and intelligent. They have a well-developed system of self-government. The land is owned by a clan, and grants are made as required. Influential chiefs form Native Councils and act as District Governors. Local affairs are controlled by elected chiefs, and their co-operators. There are also native magistrates and inspectors. This system has worked very well, and little interference has been necessary.

So fertile is the soil, and so suitable the climate, that two days work a week are sufficient to provide for the needs of a family. Perhaps this fact makes the Samoan unsuitable for work on the plantations. This unfortunate characteristic raises more than one serious problem. Without adequate labour plantations cannot be worked, or the resources of the islands developed. Germany imported Solomon Islanders and Chinese, but these have all been repatriated by the New Zealand Government, which holds Samoa for the Samoans. Still, if New Zealand control were removed, the danger is that they would soon be out-numbered by masses of hard-working Asiatics. Capable as the Samoan seems of governing his country, he appears too easy-going to develop himself. Though

Another problem, that of the settlement of several thousand Europeans, seems happily settled. They have been provided with land for their own use, and are making every effort to become successful.

Fortunately most tropical scourges are unknown in Samoa. The Administration provides medical services, and selects natives for training in the ^{Samoan} Medical School,

which gives a splendid medical education ^{for} natives ^{from} all over the Pacific. Education, primary and secondary is also provided.

After the transference of Samoa to United Nations Trusteeship, the Samoans requested self-government with New Zealand as protector and advisor. Accordingly a commission was sent out to investigate the position, and New Zealand meanwhile studied the question with the Samoan leaders. Agreement was reached, and steps taken to give it immediate effect. The Samoan Council of State, was retained as an Advisory Committee, and a Legislative Council with an absolute Samoan majority, is to have full powers in all local legislation. New Zealand retains a reserve power, and control of external affairs and defence. The Samoan Public Service is also to become independent. The United Nations Commission's report agreed with these provisions, and commends it as a first step in the gradual process towards complete autonomy.

Let us hope that this progress will continue smoothly, and the serious problems of the territory be solved. Towards this goal, both Samoa and New Zealand are keen to press forward.

Books Consulted: Pacific Islands Year Book 1944.
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