

There has been no marked change in the number of cases as compared with last year, the slight decrease in civil cases being probably due to the temporary absence of one legal agent and the death of another. Speaking generally, the increased familiarity of the public with the present legal system, which has now been in vogue nearly four years, and the replacement of German law by Ordinances of the Legislative Council, has progressively lightened the work of the Department.

The present cost of the Department in salaries is now less than it has been at any time since 1914.

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE.

The Chief Judge at present deals with practically all cases in Apia, whether within the jurisdiction of Commissioners or not, except those now, as heretofore, dealt with by the Chinese Commissioner and the Secretary for Native Affairs. This frees the Crown Solicitor and Prosecutor (who is also a member of the Legislative Council, Registrar of Court, and Registrar of Land) from the necessity of sitting as a Commissioner, and enables him to give his whole time to his other duties.

Samoa Lands and Titles Commission.—This Court dealt with eighty-eight cases during two sessions, as follows :—

13th to 29th June, 1923 : Number of cases dealt with, 47. How disposed of : Judgments, 13 ; reconciliations, 5 ; adjournments, 29.

6th November to 3rd December, 1923 : Number of cases dealt with, 41. How disposed of : Judgments, 32 ; reconciliations, 7 ; adjournments, 1 ; dismissed, 1.

Laws and Ordinances.—Nine local Ordinances drafted by the Department have been passed by the Legislative Council during the year, and, having received the Administrator's assent, have become law.

A number of amendments to the Samoa Act have been made law by the New Zealand Parliament.

Ten Orders in Council have been made by the Governor-General in Council under the authority of section 45 of the Samoa Act.

LAND REGISTRATION.

The return attached shows the number of transactions put through the Land Register :—

Return of Documents registered for Period 1st April, 1923, to 31st March, 1924.

Conveyances	12
Mortgages	18
Discharges	12
Leases	2
Crown grants, including Crown leases	18
Miscellaneous	26
Total	88

HIGH COURT OF WESTERN SAMOA.

Annual Return of Revenue for the Year, 1st April, 1923, to 31st March, 1924.

Fees collected in stamps :—		£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Registrar's Office, High Court		277	13	0			
Land Registrar's Office		53	0	0			
		<hr/>			£330	13	0
Revenue received in cash :—							
Fines, costs, marriage fees, and Court grants		1,385	16	10			
Legal fees		600	3	0			
		<hr/>			1,985	19	10
		<hr/>			£2,316	12	10

Annual Return of Criminal Cases for the Year, 1st April, 1923, to 31st March, 1924.

Sitting-days	160
Persons charged	742
Convictions record	618
Dismissed on merits	54
Withdrawn by leave of Court	80

Annual Return of Civil Cases for the Year, 1st April, 1923, to 31st March, 1924.

Sitting-days	93
Actions filed	484
Actions heard	428
Judgment given	385
Withdrawn or struck out	55

AGRICULTURAL.

COPRA.

This is by far the most important product of Western Samoa, representing last year approximately 90 per cent. of the total value of our exports. The far-reaching effect of anything that can be done to benefit this industry is therefore clearly apparent.