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375 packed cases. However, to-day many orange and banana groves lie idle while their owners make bark mats, hula skirts, necklaces, and pearl-shell brooches to acknowledge America's sudden discovery of their existence. Our own fruit imports are accordingly halved. But, since the Island price level is up while the New Zealand price level is in our main commodities stabilised, changing craftsmen back to orchardists is no simple business.

Monarchy on Tonga

Closest of all groups to New Zealand is Tonga. Tasman, making first call here after leaving the Three Kings, contrasted their hospitable inhabitants, "among whom no weapons are seen," with the "assassins" of Murderers' Bay. However, their alternative name of Friendly Islands rings queerly now it has come out that Cook, who gave it, was set down for massacre by its chiefs at the time of his departure. Envy of his ships was the reason. Indeed, it was desire for bigger craft that brought war to Tonga some years later. Parties of Tongans became mercenaries to rival Fijian kings in order to acquire big Fiji canoes, and showed off their new skills upon their countrymen when they returned. Hence the first missionaries led a terrible life until the chief of Ha'apai became Christian as George Tubou and later King of All Tonga as George Tubou I. His family continue as the only Methodist monarchs in the world.

For Tonga's early start in civilisation and settled government has kept it independent under a British treaty of protection—the only independent State in the Pacific; and a very pleasant amalgam of primitive and modern democracy it is. All land, for example, is the property of the Crown. On reaching 16 each Tongan gets his share—a town allotment plus 8½ acres of bush plantation. He may not sell, lease, or mortgage, but, if he accepts, must keep four acres at least properly farmed. M.P.'s are paid according to the days Parliament sits. There is no public debt.

Intrigue on Samoa

When John Williams's home-built schooner, mistaken for a pirate, arrived off Apia in 1830 a similar future to Tonga's might have been promised for Samoa. But the descendants of the King Malietoa who welcomed "Viliamu" could not hold the country together. Moreover, the presence of the *Deutsche Handels und Plantagen Gesellschaft der Sudsee Inseln zu Hamburg* (or, more simply, "the Long-Handle Firm") kept intertribal and even international intrigue boiling continuously until probably only the hurricane of 1889 averted war by destroying six of the seven warships gathered in Apia Harbour—the Calliope alone managing to steam out, under Westport coal. The Germans then ruled, sternly but well, until New Zealand arrived in August, 1914. But if we were quick to capture, we were clumsy and slow in learning to administer. Until 1934 or thereabouts we did very little to understand the complicated problems which a century of clash had created. But the last ten years have been different. More recently still American Marines tried weaning the Samoans with wages from banana cultivation to military work and with *peasoupe* (canned meat) from banana eating to American ways. But the *fa' Samoa* or Samoan way of life, which still prohibits

trouser-wearing as an apeing of the *papelangi* (men from heaven, pakehas), is very tenacious.

Fiji, the final area which the Prime Minister's party will visit, is tied to New Zealand not merely by bananas and oranges, but also as our principal source of sugar. Politically we have not had any connection. Indeed, Thakombau, the original "King of the Cannibal Islands," had extraordinary difficulty in finding any takers when, in 1874, he tried to give away his country. Having mortgaged this plum of the Pacific pie for some £9000, he found Britain unwilling to take over the country if the debt went with it, while the United States Government did not even reply to his offer. Incidentally, it is said that when the High Chiefs finally signed the Deed of Cession, unconditionally, many believed Queen Victoria to be a lady of their own colour. They had seen her bronze statue.

SIMPLE STORY

HOW TO GET A FLAT

(Exact reproduction of conversation of three young women, overheard in Auckland restaurant.)

A: Well, the latest, girls, is that Ron and I are going flatting.

B: Flatting? You haven't found a flat surely?

A: No. But we're in no hurry. We've got time to look around. It's just that we're tired of living with the family. There's tons of room and all that, but you know how it is, you can't have people in—at least, you can have people in, but it's not the same with the family around all the time.

C: Well, dearie, I like your chances. You know Mary and Brian? You know, the ones who were married last Saturday? Well, Brian wanted to get a flat for them to come into when they came back from their honeymoon. They advertised. No replies, of course. So Brian went along to an agent. I forget the name. Mary did tell me, but I forget. Anyway, it doesn't matter. Anyway, Brian went along and they told him they hadn't a flat on their books. No show at all. But just then a man walked in and picked up some keys for a flat. So Brian said how did that man get a flat? The girl looked peculiar and shrugged her shoulders and Brian smelt a rat and asked to speak to the manager and just for a shot in the dark he said to him would it be worth twenty quid to you to find me a flat within a fortnight? And, my dears, what d'you think he said? He said no, he didn't think he could find one for that, but he could try for twenty-five! And what d'you think? Brian had the keys next morning!

A: But that's bribery!

B: Twenty-five quid!

C: Yes, twenty-five quid. Mary told me herself.

A: But it ought to be exposed.

B: Yes, it ought to be exposed. It's criminal.

C: Yes, it ought to be. But I forget the name of the man. I can find out from Mary when she comes back. It certainly ought to be exposed.

A: But twenty-five quid! Can you see Ron paying it?

B: You mean, can we see you getting a flat?

C: Well, don't tell me I didn't tell you how.

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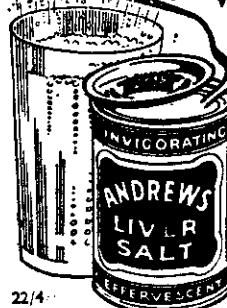
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