

SOUTH PACIFIC COMMISSION

FIFTH TECHNICAL MEETING ON FISHERIES

Noumea, New Caledonia
10 - 11 August 1972

TERRITORIAL REPORT

GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN SAMOA
PROGRESS IN FISHERIES 1970-72 AND ANTICIPATED
FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

Introduction

The Division of Fisheries of the Department of Agriculture, Forests and Fisheries came into being on 1st January 1970. Initially, the Division was staffed by one expatriate Fisheries Officer aided by two casual employees. In mid-1972 the Division numbers some 57 personnel, (including five Fisheries Assistants, two of whom are on overseas Fisheries Officers Training Courses; three fully-trained Coxswains and two complete Fishing Methods Demonstration crew-units).

Lines of Advancement

Western Samoan economy still largely falls into the rural "Village subsistence" category. Consequently, any basic Fisheries development must take into account this important sector.

Malnutrition and chronic protein-vitamin deficiency in children had, as early as 1966, reached significant levels and by 1970 the incidence was over 8%. Since village-economy is not based on a momentary-system, advancement of purely commercial fisheries would not have eased this situation, since ready cash is not usually available for the purchase of retailed fish. Consequently, fisheries extension development was aimed at establishing autonomous village fishing societies or guilds whose main purpose was to bring in fresh-fish for general distribution, and whose secondary purpose only was to become viable "business".

One very worthwhile side-effect which resulted from the promotion of village fishing endeavours was the great advancement in the general standard of fishing-practice and seamanship. From being reef-and-lagoon canoe fishermen with little or no deep-sea experience, society members gradually but steadily evolved into deep-water, all

weather fishermen, and it is upon this cadre of trained men that commercial fisheries will be built. Thus the first step in total fisheries development leads inexorably on to subsequent stages. Only by initiating this first step could any logical lasting development be realised, because, in the final analysis, satisfactory utilisation of a resource depends upon three factors:

- (1) The presence of the resource itself.
- (2) An adequate supply of willing, available man-power.
- (3) Technical know-how.

Specific Projects 1970/1972

These included:

- (1) Setting-up of 42 Village Fishing Associations.
- (2) The establishment of a successful Turtle Hatchery.
- (3) The building of a prototype 38-foot Ferro Cement Fishing Boat.
- (4) The introduction of a Tuna Fishery Training and Development Project.

Anticipated Development 1973/1975

Include:

- (1) The extension of the Village Fishing Association concept into small, viable fishing-cooperatives.
- (2) The introduction of logistic and infrastructure necessary to mount sizeable commercial fisheries.
- (3) The progression of the Tuna Fishery Training and Development Project into full-scale commercial operations.
- (4) The establishment (with the assistance of UNDP/FFHC) of a Regional Fisheries Training School.