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PETITION FROM MR. JACK THORNTON CONCERNING
WESTERN SAMOA

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of procedure of the Trusteeship Council)

Box 656
Samabula
Fiji

21.VIII.'56

Dear Sir,

I would be grateful if you would cause the enclosed newspaper clippings to be made available to United Nations officials dealing with Western Samoa, as these clippings may be of assistance when considering the problem at any time. I formerly acted as editor of "The Samoa Bulletin", published in Apia, and I share the general view that Samoans are not yet ready for self-government, and that Hon. P.L.M. Morgan represents their best interests.

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) JACK THORNTON
Jack Thornton

The Fiji Guardian
Saturday, 5 May 1956
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UN MISSION

The United Nations mission visiting Trust Territories in the Pacific passed through Fiji this week on its way to W. Samoa. As this newspaper reported biographical details of the mission, and its itinerary, some weeks ago, there is little to add except that an official press release this week revealed that Mr. P. Edmunds accompanied the mission on its way from New Zealand to Apia.

Mr. Edmunds until last year held the somewhat nebulous position of "Special Adviser" to the High Commissioner. It is understood that he is now employed by the Islands Territories Department in Wellington. Mr. Edmunds is related by marriage to a Samoan family, so one may logically suppose that he would not be particularly interested in stressing to the UN mission the danger of granting self-government to W. Samoa without first introducing universal suffrage. New Zealand has accepted the Samoan chiefs' attitude that commoners should not be granted the vote, although NZ has expressed a hope that universal suffrage will eventually be introduced. The High Commissioner appears to support the Samoan chiefs' utterances that universal suffrage and the introduction of secret ballots would be opposed to Samoan custom. Yet universal suffrage has been introduced in Eastern (American) Samoa and LMS church affairs are self-governing in Samoa, through secret ballots.

A UN mission visits W. Samoa every three years, and reports back to the Trusteeship Council. The present mission will most likely prove the most important of all UN Missions to W. Samoa, for its report will certainly influence the implementing or otherwise of proposals regarding self-government.

During W. Samoa's constitutional convention about 18 months ago, local Europeans, and informed observers from overseas - including missionaries - prophesied that if W. Samoa were granted self-government without recognition of High Chief Mata-Afa's regal status, there would be civil war within a year, over the issue of Heads of State.

Mata'afa's claim to recognition as prospective Head of State have been advanced again recently in W. Samoa's Legislative Assembly, which sits under the

joint chairmanship of Malietoa and Tamasese, who have been named as Joint Heads of State when self-government is granted. Mata'afa's claims were again ignored, although he is the only "royal chief" with royal blood on both sides of his parentage. He is reported to favour the introduction of universal suffrage. Mata'afa is teetotal, and an active member of the LMS church, which claims about 70 per cent of the Samoan population as adherents.

It is certain that he has a large following among commoners, and it is possible that, out of a consciousness of the dignity of his position by birth, he is sitting back and letting the two lesser "royal chiefs" condemn themselves in promises about self-government. If and when it is granted, Mata'afa might immediately thrust forward and establish his claim to Head of State.
