Reviews of French Polynesia, Tuvalu, and Western Samoa are not included in this issue because of circumstances beyond our control.

**AMERICAN SAMOA**

The year under review in American Samoa was in several respects similar to 1989 and 1990. Hurricane Val ravaged the Samoan Islands for three days, from 7–10 December, with greater force and duration than Hurricane Ofa of February 1990. Remarkably, injuries directly related to the storm were few, with only one reported fatality.

Off-island assistance was made available immediately through the Red Cross; church, military, and community donations; and through the Federal Emergency Management Agency, which set up five Disaster Assistance Centers for loan applications. By mid-January, the agency had received more than 9,500 damage claims, providing an average of US$2000 for every man, woman, and child in the territory. Direct aid from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, which completed its assistance in late April, amounted to US$14.5 million in temporary housing assistance, US$15 million in individual family grants, and a US$16 million obligation to the government for repair of public buildings. Another US$24 million was provided in low-interest federal loans through the Small Business Administration.

Government financial problems continued into fiscal year 1992, exacerbating difficulties in the normal operations of government. A public outcry over the deteriorated condition of public school restrooms prompted a *fono* investigation and brought criticism of Commercial Design Corporation for delays in repairs that were supposed to have been completed by the start of the school year. Governor Coleman announced in September 1991 that education would be his number one priority for the year. Adopting the “America 2000” educational program of President Bush, the governor declined to include recommendations put forth by the American Samoa Educational Summit, which met earlier in the year. The summit had identified three main issues to be addressed: leadership, an elected board of education, and a greater role for taxpayers in voting on sources and control of funding for education. Concern has also been expressed in the public and private sectors about politicization, teacher qualifications, substandard language and math proficiency levels among secondary students, school disrepair, and financial mismanagement. These problems are likely to remain unattended without reform efforts that address specific local educational needs.

Controversy between the territory’s congressman, Faleomavaega Eni Hunkin, and the governor's office erupted in December 1991 over the issue of local minimum wages. Hunkin's letter to the governor in support of the Murphy Bill (which proposes to place territorial minimum wages at par with those in the main-
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land United States) appeared in the Samoa News. Dyke Coleman, the governor's son and chief of staff, responded in the press to the congressman's blindsiding of the canneries and the American Samoa Government by first opposing the inclusion of tuna under the Magnuson Act, and then unexpectedly supporting the raise in minimum wages. Hunkin later clarified his position as neither supporting nor opposing the Murphy bill, though he feels it is time to determine "why hard-working people cannot make a decent wage to lead a life with dignity" (Samoa News, 4 June 1992).

The House Interior Subcommittee on Insular and International Affairs conducted hearings in Washington, DC, in May on the General Accounting Office Report on the territory's deficit crisis. Territorial officials' testimony before the committee played heavily on two themes: budget deficits are universal; and outside (eg, US officials') insensitivity to, or ignorance of the "uniqueness" of American Samoa's culture, history, and inexperience in self-government. Governor Coleman's views on the report were justifiably critical of deficits carried over from previous administrations and other uncontrollable "cause-and-effect events" affecting government revenues. His statements that "the draft report contains no finding of graft, fraud or corruption in [his] administration," however, is misleading (Samoa News, 26 May 1992). The report duly noted that government officials guilty of "apparent violations of the law" had not been held accountable.

The General Accounting Office audit was perceived by many local officials as the result of a political move by Congressman Hunkin, who requested the review after appropriate responses from the Department of Interior were not received. The report attributed the government's growing deficit problem to poor financial management practices, inadequate tax collection, failure to enforce existing procurement laws, and prohibiting anti-deficiency spending. The Department of Interior was also blamed for lack of oversight in efforts to improve the territory's financial management practices.

By the end of June, the government faced bankruptcy again and presented yet another request to the fono to borrow millions from the retirement fund. Approval by the previous year's fono of a US$5 million retirement fund loan was contingent on administration promises to follow through with revenue generating and saving measures. During the year, the public was faced with serious shortages in medicine at the hospital, procedural violations in hiring and awarding salary raises, and other questionable, illegal, or unethical acts. The latest request for US$15 million has created widespread public outrage and generated charges that the administration is incapable of setting its house in order.

With elections coming up in November 1992, several new candidates for gubernatorial and congressional representative have announced their intention to run. Incumbent territorial attorney general, Tautai Aviata Fa'alevao, and former fono representative, Tuika Tuika, Jr, have declared their candidacies for the US house seat currently held by Congressman Eni Hunkin. Former deputy director of the
treasury Tumuatau Falema‘o Pili seeks election to the office of governor, as does Galumalemana Frank Pritchard, former director of agriculture and one-time legislator from Leone. Pritchard has chosen former director of medical services Dr Nofo Siliga as his running mate, while former governor A. P. Lutali has selected Tauese P. Sunia, previously education director, as his lieutenant governor. All challengers face the upcoming elections with the formidable task of attempting to undo what the politics of dependency and, some would say, greed have created in American Samoa.

BILL LEGALLEY

COOK ISLANDS

Culture and debt were the themes that dominated the year under review. The two are related in a number of ways.

Prime Minister Sir Geoffrey Henry has a strong personal interest in and deep knowledge of culture, and a clear vision of its role in giving Cook Islanders confidence, national cohesion, and a unique identity. No one else is as skilled in using culture as a political tool, also a forte of the first head of government, his late cousin Albert Henry. The priority being given to cultural matters is far beyond that in any other Pacific nation—or anywhere else we know of in the world. The Ministry of Culture (Tauranga Vananga) was established in 1990 and is now bearing some quality fruit. This is in encouraging contrast to its predecessor, Albert Henry’s Tumu Korero, which started with noble sentiments but degenerated into a crass political machine and was finally abolished in 1978.

In October 1992 the Cook Islands hosts the Festival of Pacific Arts, an enormous—even courageous—undertaking for so small a nation. Every person in every village on Rarotonga is involved in preparations for this major Pacific event—village beautification schemes with significant prizes, planting programs to feed the extras, preparations for accommodating, catering for, and entertaining two thousand participants plus more than that number of visitors. This means a doubling of the adult population of Rarotonga. Enormous efforts are involved, but it is an integrating and unifying challenge for the nation. Rarotonga’s roads are being put into better condition than ever, its water supply upgraded, public buildings renovated, and the main town foreshore is being expanded and made more attractive.

At the same time, a large new National Cultural Centre is under construction in Avarua. The expected cost of US$6 million is reasonable for the structure being erected, but enormous relative to the size of the nation. It is the equivalent per person of Papua New Guinea or New Zealand spending US$1200 million on such a center. Maintenance and operating costs will also be high. The two-week Festival of Pacific Arts is budgeted to cost US$3 million. As an indication of the priority being given to culture, though not to negate its value, this is equivalent to Papua New Guinea or New Zealand spending US$600 million on such an event.

Tourism, the main economic force