

were gone into by the New South Wales Conference of 1884, and its decision was virtually an acquittal of Mr. Moulton.

21. I have said that the General Conference, to which the last appeal had been addressed, assembled at Christchurch, New Zealand, in the end of 1884, appointed a Committee to visit Tonga; but before the arrival of that Committee, and even, I think, before the news of its appointment could have reached the islands, a Free Wesleyan Church was started at Haapai by Mr. Baker. Mr. Baker's account of this transaction will be found in his evidence; and, although he denies having set up this Church, I think the evidence bears out the contrary assertion; and I think, moreover, that the secession had been prearranged with the King. This event apparently took place on Sunday, the 4th January, 1885.

22. The Committee sent from Christchurch appears to have done its utmost to bring about a reconciliation, and even agreed to the withdrawal of Mr. Moulton if Mr. Watkin also left Tonga. The attachment of Tonga as an independent district to the Conference of Victoria and Tasmania was agreed to by both sides; but to the withdrawal of Mr. Watkin the King would not consent, and the negotiations consequently terminated unsuccessfully.

23. I have dwelt thus far on the differences existing between the Wesleyan Conference of New South Wales and Queensland, on the one side, and the King of Tonga, with his adviser, Mr. Baker, on the other; and I have done so because I feel that the discord ensuing from this quarrel has been the all-potent factor in the events that followed.

24. Very shortly after the institution of the Free Church the King appears to have held a *fono* (meeting at which the will of the King or Government is declared) at Uiha, at which he expressed his desire that all who loved him should join his Church. This in itself may be regarded, perhaps, as a perfectly legitimate expression of the King's desire for religious unity in his kingdom; but it must be remembered that it is not long since that the wish of the King was the law of the land, and all native evidence brought before me went to prove that the great bulk of the chiefs and people still so regard it. The King himself, in answer to my questions, said that he considered it was the duty of all loyal subjects to act in this matter as he wished them to act.

25. There can be no doubt that this expression of the King's wish or will travelled quickly throughout the islands; and *fonos* were held in all directions, at which the King and the chiefs harangued their people and pressed them to join the Free Church.

26. The great bulk of the people apparently, on hearing what was the will of the King, acted as he desired; but a considerable number remained true to their original Church, and were more or less hardly treated by their chiefs for what was then designated as "disobedience to the King."

27. The difficulty of decision to even the most intelligent of the Wesleyan natives—and some of them are very intelligent—was enhanced by the fact that there was no difference of doctrine between the Churches; that the King's Church was, so they were told, still the Wesleyan Church; by the very imperfect knowledge that any of them—even the so-called nobles, who are members of the King's Council—had of the provisions of the Constitution, or appreciation of the obligations which it imposed upon the King. It is therefore surprising to me that so large a number still adhered to Mr. Moulton. In many cases these people were treated with more or less cruelty. Beatings were not infrequent, and deportations were common. I do not wish it to be understood that the newspaper accounts of these persecutions in 1885 and 1886 are true; on the contrary, they are full of exaggerations. But there is sufficient truth in them to justify me in saying that during those years the remaining adherents of the Wesleyan Church were unfairly, and, in many instances, cruelly, treated. During all this time I am bound to say that neither the King nor his Premier showed any disposition to interfere. On the contrary, they appear to have sought, by the passing of certain laws during the latter part of 1885, to intensify the difficulties under which the Wesleyans were labouring. Two laws appear to me to have had this tendency; and, although Mr. Baker has denied that they were passed with the object I have indicated, I have no doubt, from the false interpretation that was allowed to be put upon them, and from the use made of their provisions, that they were meant to force the Wesleyans into obedience to the King's will.

28. By the first of these laws it was made penal to preach or to attend a preaching in any place where there were less than six residents of the same denomination as the preacher. The word used to express residents was "*kakai totonu*," and this was, in the application of the law, held to mean—and I believe, in strict interpretation, does mean—persons whose ancestors belong to the land on which the town had been built. The oppressive action of this construction of the law cannot be over-estimated. In Tonga, where genealogies are much studied, it was not difficult for the Town Ruler, or for the police, to prove to the satisfaction of a Police Magistrate, such as Togatea (see his evidence, Nos. 104, 106, and 113), that, out of an assemblage of, perhaps, thirty persons, not six had lived in the place from time immemorial, the consequence being the infliction of a heavy fine on all present. In one instance, that of Foui, those present who belonged, and whose ancestors belonged, to an adjacent piece of ground called "*Lolopoaga*," on which no houses had ever been built, but the cultivators of which had always dwelt in Foui, were held not to be *kakai totonu* of that town, and twenty-nine of them were fined 24 dollars each for attending a preaching there. Comment on this is needless. The idea of passing this law appears to have been derived from the old English Conventicles Act, 22 Car. II., cap. 1.

29. The same law contained a provision that unless thirty persons of any denomination lived in a place it should not be lawful for them to have a caretaker (held to include teacher or minister) sent to the town. This had its meaning strained by the deportation from the villages where land had been granted to the Wesleyans, and churches had been erected, of their ministers and caretakers; and advantage was taken by Government of their forced absence to carry into effect a law relative to the weeding and cleaning of grounds, which law it was utterly impossible for them to comply with, against the responsible Wesleyan authorities; and these were in many instances fined large sums, and, in default of payment, were committed for hard-labour imprisonment. Mr. Baker admitted in his evidence that the law contained no provision to justify these deportations.