

in case it might assist him to know what was considered objectionable by the prisoners themselves. Colonel Holmes will report in due course, and I assume that what he finds to be necessary will be attended to.

16. CLASSIFICATION.

The case of educated men in such a community is undoubtedly a hard one. Its hardship is inherent in the situation, and not due to any deliberate treatment. Judging by the tone adopted by some of the witnesses of this class, these have not proved a means of producing a more contented condition among those below them in station in life. This observation, however, does not apply to those who have conducted classes and endeavoured to improve the education of their fellow-prisoners, a course which has tended in a marked degree to improve the condition of matters and to take the minds of pupils off grounds of discontent. Several witnesses insisted that there ought to be a classification of the prisoners, in favour of those of superior station in life. This, however, which is feasible at Motuihi, is a most difficult question here. Directly the classification was attempted discontent would certainly arise, and there would be complaints of the creation of a superior and favoured class. Symptoms of this kind of discontent have at times appeared sufficient to warn the authorities of the danger. All that they can do is to give men of superior education, who are not disposed to disturb the discipline of the camp, opportunities of associating together in a set of rooms set apart for them; and in some cases comfortable frame tents have been given to them, two occupying a tent. I visited one of these prisoners at his tent and was assured it afforded comfortable quarters.

17. SAMOAN OFFICIALS.

During the course of the inquiry three former Civil servants from Samoa obtained leave to give evidence. The main portion of their complaint refers to matters under consideration with other cases. They further complain of hindering the delivery of complaints to the Minister of Defence on the occasion of the inspection of the camp by him, and forbidding approach to the camp when he was present. I have submitted this to the Minister, and have only to say that it is not shown that Major Matheson has done anything wrong in this respect.

Another charge is—" (5) Totally insufficient accommodation and attention, having regard to our social position." There was a controversy as to whether these gentlemen were entitled to be treated as officer prisoners of war. Major Matheson was of opinion that on the evidence before him the German Government did not recognize them as officers within the Hague Convention, and acted on this opinion. He gave them the best quarters he could find for them, and there was little or no complaint from the majority.

There were other complaints by these three officials, as to which there was a good deal of angry controversy before me. Since they returned to Motuihi they have attempted to add to the evidence respecting alleged interference with their correspondence, especially that with the Swiss Consul-General at Melbourne. I have had doubts from the first whether I ought to have allowed them to give evidence, as the whole of their grievances have been redressed, and they state that they are now quite comfortable at Motuihi. I could not settle the matters in controversy between them and Major Matheson or between them and the Government without further prolonged discussion and further evidence, which would throw no light on the question into which I am inquiring under this commission. This I decline to undertake. What I have heard confirms the impression that I ought not to have asked the Minister to send these witnesses down, as their grievances have long since been redressed. I did so because I had throughout proceeded on the rule of refusing a hearing to nobody who desired to be heard.

Since the close of the inquiry another official, who was not a witness, has written to me making imputations against Major Matheson, contradicting his evidence and professing to add to the evidence of the witnesses. This last letter has apparently not been communicated to Major Matheson. This communication alone would, if anything called for the investigation, necessitate reopening the whole of this part of the inquiry. It is open to these gentlemen to address the Minister of Defence.