

COST OF SAMOAN CONSTABULARY.

Mr. HOLLAND: I should like some information from the Committee as to the position here immediately prior to the coming of the Constabulary—I mean, with regard to the occupying Force.

Mr. NELSON: The garrison was here before: the Constabulary relieved the garrison. The garrison was here as a military force during the war. When the war terminated we thought that when the garrison left that would be a sign that the war was over, and we got the Constabulary, which was supposed to be the first act in the Civil administration.

Mr. HOLLAND: Was there any trouble with the occupying Force that led to its being taken away?

Hon. Sir JAMES ALLEN: I will answer that.

Mr. HOLLAND: I should like to get the information from the local people.

Hon. Sir JAMES ALLEN: The reason why they were changed is in my mind and nobody else's.

Mr. NELSON: Do you mean trouble between the occupying Force and the population here?

Mr. HOLLAND: Generally speaking.

Mr. NELSON: There was no trouble.

Mr. HOLLAND: You say in the pamphlet that you were practically left to the newspapers of New Zealand to find out that it was originally intended to send Constabulary here. Did you have no official information whatever?—No. As far as I can gather from the committee, there was nobody who stated that he had any official information; the community here did not receive any information as to the Constabulary before the reports were published in the New Zealand papers.

What is the work that the Constabulary are doing here? I understand you have over fifty?—That is more than I can tell you.

You state in the pamphlet that there are forty-eight constables, five sergeants, and four officers—fifty-seven altogether?—They are here all right, but what they are doing I cannot say.

Are they on active service?—We see them occasionally moving around. They are a very nice body of men—very nice men; but what these fifty do I cannot say. I think one of them called on me one day about some benzine theft. Another fellow came upstairs to my private rooms, and I had occasion to order him out. Those are the only times I have had anything to do with them.

What did you order him out for?—Because he had no right to come to my private rooms.

Was he on any police business? Why was the policeman in your rooms?—He came up, and he said that we should not talk too loudly, or something of that sort. I asked, "Have you a warrant to come in here?" He replied, "No," and then I said "Please leave."

In the opinion of your committee, are there reasons in Samoa at the present time sufficient to warrant the expenditure of £30,000 a year on keeping a Constabulary here?—It is distinctly stated in the article that we do not think the position warrants this expenditure.

Hon. Sir JAMES ALLEN: First of all, there is one statement here that I challenge—£30,000 a year. Secondly, I want to know why this was inserted when you members of the committee had full knowledge that the New Zealand Government were bearing the whole cost. And you must have known it for some time. As to the duties that the Constabulary are doing, it is obvious to most people that there are very many duties they have to take up. They have very many duties as conservers of the peace here. The reason why they were sent was that we wanted to indicate to you Samoans the replacement of military administration by Civil administration. This was the first step we could take, and I thought you would take it as an indication in the New Zealand mind that we wanted to get rid of the military as soon as we could. There was no other reason for withdrawing the military. The Constabulary are a specially-selected body of men. I think they are well officered. I think they are a credit to the place. And I want to say this to you: that though you may not see good reasons for the sending of these police to Samoa, the New Zealand Government do see good reasons, which I am not prepared at the present moment to disclose. We have good reasons for sending them. They are not here permanently. They are under engagement for a certain time, and it is not the intention of the Government to keep them here for all time. They will gradually be replaced, I trust, by further Samoan police under competent officers—Samoan if we can get them, white if we cannot.

Mr. C. V. ALLOM: I should like to explain that until the public meeting had been held and the committee appointed we had not heard there was likely to be any alteration with regard to the payment of the police, or that they were likely to be sent away, or anything at all about them. We knew nothing except what we had seen in the papers.

Hon. Sir JAMES ALLEN: Those who say that they did not know the Constabulary were to be paid for by New Zealand—I must ask them whether they read the *Samoa Times*. Perhaps they do not.

Mr. DOBBIE: They do.

Hon. Sir JAMES ALLEN: On the 20th of December of last year the editor of the *Samoa Times* had a subnote attached to an article on the Samoan Constabulary, and these are the final words: "The practical position is, therefore, that New Zealand will foot the bill."

Mr. ALLOM: That is with regard to any loss, any deficiency

Hon. Sir JAMES ALLEN: Oh, no. I am sorry if you did not know, but I do not think it is our fault if you did not. I am sorry if there has been any misunderstanding. Anyhow, you have no misunderstanding now: New Zealand pays for the Samoan Constabulary.

Mr. HOLLAND: That does not dispose of the answer to my question, that they did not know officially of the coming of the Constabulary.

Hon. Sir JAMES ALLEN: No, and for a very good reason: because it was not policy to disclose that they were coming until the military were removed.