

NOTES OF INTERVIEW BETWEEN THE HON. W. NOSWORTHY, MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, AND THE CITIZENS' COMMITTEE, AT APIA, 11TH JUNE, 1927.

Present: Hon. Mr. Nelson, Hon. Mr. Williams, Hon. Mr. Westbrook, and Messrs. Smyth, Gurr, Meredith, and Baxter; Tofaeono, AINU'u, Tuisila, Ālipia, Lagolago, and Faumuina; Two Fautuas and eight Faipules. Mr. J. D. Gray, Secretary, Department of External Affairs, New Zealand; Hon. A. McCarthy; Hon. F. Lewis; Colonel Hutchen, Secretary, Samoan Administration; Mr. A. B. Ross.

The proceedings were opened by the presentation by the deputation of a kava-root to the Hon. Minister and his party.

The Minister thanked the deputation for their presentation.

*Hon. Minister:* Mr. Nelson, and members of the Citizens' Committee, as you have placed before me, through the Administrator, the questions that you desire me to answer, and as there has been no reply from you to the letter from the Administrator asking you to be good enough to furnish me with any further questions that you might have, in order that I could deal with them at the same time. I think the best procedure will be for me to make my reply which I have promised to give you, and then Mr. Nelson and other gentlemen of the Citizens' Committee can speak, if they deem it necessary, in connection with any remarks that I make.

*Mr. Nelson:* We have a few remarks to make in presenting you with the originals of the reports.

*Hon. Minister:* Would that mean a speech from each individual?

*Mr. Nelson:* No, just from myself.

*Hon. Minister:* I think the best thing is for me to deal with the questions which I have already promised to deal with, and then for you to say anything you may like to say afterwards. Is that acceptable?

*Mr. Smyth:* Mr. Nelson has further remarks to make.

*Hon. Minister:* I have no wish to stifle any discussion or criticism; but I have come to give my reply, as representing the New Zealand Government, to what has been represented to me.

(The Hon. Minister's opening remarks as above were interpreted to the Natives present.)

The Hon. Minister then read his reply to the representations of the Citizens' Committee, as follows:—

"Gentlemen, I welcome this opportunity of meeting you members of the European Citizens' Committee, as well as those members of the Samoan race who have joined with you in submitting various matters for my consideration. I have prepared my reply in writing to avoid any possibility of misunderstanding in the future as to my opinion and attitude as Minister of External Affairs, representing the Government of New Zealand; and I will also express myself in the plainest terms and most definite manner, so that neither you, gentlemen, nor the rest of the Samoan community—Native and European—nor the public of New Zealand, may have the least doubt as to what I think of the forces which appear to be deliberately working to-day in an endeavour to sow seeds of discord in and upset the tranquillity of this territory.

First, let me say I am here in fulfilment of a promise made to honourable members of the House of Representatives of New Zealand last session that I would pay an official visit to Samoa before I again met them in Parliament this year; and, emphatically, that I am not here because of any representations, criticisms, or complaints made either to myself or to any member of the New Zealand Cabinet, by the chairman of this committee or any one else. There is absolutely no truth in the statement which has been circulated here, and throughout New Zealand and elsewhere, that I have come at the behest or because of the representations of Mr. Nelson, and the personal references made in the pamphlet, issued over the name of Mr. S. H. Meredith, about my visit are, therefore, an impertinence and an insult. I was under no obligation to come to Samoa except at my own time and in my own way.

The members of this deputation, both European and Native, have subscribed their names to reports dealing with various aspects of the administration, and I have considered these most carefully, in conjunction with the comments and facts in respect thereto submitted by His Excellency the Administrator and heads of Departments. In addition, I have had the pleasure and privilege of meeting the accredited leaders—Fautuas and Faipules—of the Samoan people, and of spending a busy week mixing freely with all classes of the community in Upolu and Savai'i, inspecting the principal Administration activities, and visiting the New Zealand Government, private, and Native plantations. I believe I am entitled to assert that in the short period of my stay I have seen as much, or more, of the real work that is being done in this group outside Apia than some of this committee, who claim to speak as old residents.

My study of Samoan events convinces me that it is very necessary at this stage to refer to past history in order particularly that the public, both in and beyond this Territory, may be given a proper perspective of the situation of to-day. History has a strange way of repeating itself, and it certainly has done so here. I see not only an exact similarity between the criticism, charges, and allegations of to-day and those of past years, but also the same critics.

Let me give you instances. Since New Zealand assumed responsibility for the mandate administration, many comparisons have been directly made by some of you gentlemen between the previous German and New Zealand Administrations, in praise of the former and to the detriment of the latter. You seem to have forgotten that this same perfect German Government when you had it, was apparently so distasteful to you and other citizens of Apia of that day that on the 4th February, 1910, you addressed a petition to the "High President of the German Parliament in Berlin" expressing yourselves to the extent of eight and a half pages of type-written foolscap, and, *inter alia*, asserting, "Unfortunately, most of the foreign inhabitants now