

request to their followers to disperse and to keep the peace, no active steps were taken by the committee to control the movement they had initiated, and the Administration was entirely satisfied that they were nevertheless still actively engaged in fomenting discontent.

In June, 1927, a petition purporting to be signed by a number of Natives was presented to the New Zealand Parliament praying for redress against certain alleged grievances set out therein. The petition was referred to a Joint Committee of both Houses of Parliament.

The matters complained of had, of course, taken place in Western Samoa, and it was not considered advisable by the Joint Committee, even if it had been feasible, to bring to New Zealand the necessary witnesses, including a large number of Natives. On receipt of a request from the Administrator, therefore, that the whole matter should be exhaustively inquired into in Samoa, the Government were glad to adopt this suggestion, and accordingly a Commission of Inquiry was set up for this purpose.

The Commission comprised Sir Charles Skerrett, Chief Justice of New Zealand, as Chairman, and Judge McCormick, a senior Judge of the Native Land Court of New Zealand. The order of reference of the Commission was as follows :—

- (1) Whether, having regard to the duties undertaken by the Government of New Zealand under the mandate of the League of Nations, there is just or reasonable cause for the complaints or objections set forth in Parliamentary Paper A. 4B, 1927, and in the petition presented to Parliament during the 1927 session.
- (2) Whether the Administrator or the officials of the Administration have in any manner exceeded their duty in the exercise of the authority entrusted to them respectively, or have failed to exercise their respective functions honestly and justly.
- (3) Whether, having regard to the Samoan Native customs and to the due maintenance of government and order in the Mandated Territory, it would be prudent and safe to wholly repeal and abrogate all power to require a Samoan to remove for a definite period from one place on the islands to another.

The competency and integrity of this Commission could not be, and was not, doubted on any side, and the order of reference was sufficiently wide to cover not only all the questions raised in the petition presented to the House, but any other complaints against the Administration. On the setting-up of the Commission the Joint Parliamentary Committee discontinued its inquiry, and copies of the evidence were made available to the Commission, to counsel for the complainants, and to counsel for the Administration.

The Commission took evidence in Samoa from 155 witnesses (a number of whom spoke on behalf of others who were present before the Commission and assented to the evidence, so that the views of 300 persons in all were obtained) and went most exhaustively into every aspect of the complaints that were brought before it. The Commission's report, which has been published in New Zealand and also sent to the League of Nations and to members of the Permanent Mandates Commission, contains a complete vindication of the Administration, and a trenchant criticism of the weakness of the complainants' case and of the methods adopted by the committee to foment disaffection in Samoa.

Before the appointment of the Commission of Inquiry the Government of New Zealand had felt it necessary, in view of the somewhat alarming increase of unrest in the Territory, to pass an amendment to the Samoa Act giving power to the Governor-General in Council to order the deportation, after inquiry, of any person found to be preventing or hindering the due performance by the Government of New Zealand of its functions and duties under the terms of the mandate, or the due administration by the Executive Government of the Territory, and on the findings of the Commission being published in New Zealand and in Samoa the members of the Citizens' Committee were again requested to make a genuine effort to bring an end to the trouble. Notwithstanding the fact that their complaints had been shown to be without any foundation in fact, their response was so unsatisfactory that the New Zealand Government and the Administration were convinced that they would be failing in their duty towards the Natives of Samoa and in their responsibilities under the mandate if they omitted to take a drastic step at this stage. With a view, therefore, to removing the primary cause of the trouble the deportation provisions of the Samoa Amendment Act, 1927, were put into force, and after the inquiry prescribed by the Act Messrs. O. F. Nelson and E. W. Gurr were in January last deported for a period of five years, and Mr. A. G. Smyth for a period of two years.

By taking this step the Administration hoped that, left to their own devices, the Natives would gradually recognize the true state of affairs, and that the Mau movement would die down. This result has, however, not yet been achieved. No doubt the Natives are not capable of understanding the actual effect of the findings of the Royal Commission, though every effort has been made to make the result available to them in their own language : influence has continued to be exercised from outside Samoa, and despite the efforts of the Administration the Mau movement has not abated. From time to time the Administrator attempted to meet the Native leaders of the Mau in person, feeling confident that were he able to place the true facts before them they would appreciate the position. The Mau, however, consistently refused to hear him.

Shortly before the deportations events took a more ominous turn with the institution of what was known as the Mau police force. Uniforms were issued to members of the Mau, and a system of picketing commenced by which the Mau endeavoured to enforce a boycott of European stores in Apia. Even this was tolerated by the Administration for a period, but from time to time demonstrations by more unruly members of the movement caused some alarm as to the safety of life and property, and in February of this year, in view of what appeared to be the development of a threatening situation, it was found necessary to despatch to Apia the cruisers of the New Zealand Division of the Royal Navy. On the arrival of the cruisers it was decided to take the obvious course of clearing the streets of the Mau police, and accordingly, on the 23rd and 24th February, a force of sailors and marines,