

We do not think that the evidence justifies us in embarking in this report upon a detailed statement of the charges and the evidence relating to them. Our brief references to the nature of the charges will show how ridiculously trivial were the instances which were given in evidence to support them. This was not denied, and it could not be said, nor was it suggested, that the instances in support of the charges possessed any special or peculiar significance in the Native mind. Mr. Baxter, at page 408, in his concluding speech, said :—

There is another striking phase of the Samoan evidence, and that is the number of complaints made against the Faipules by the Samoan witnesses called. Every Samoan witness called, no matter on what subject he was called, when asked if he had any complaint against the Faipule, had some. Many were trivial and unimportant, and a number were denied by the Faipule, and others do not concern the Commission at all. I do not propose to go into the merits.

The Chairman : Will you mention one complaint that is not trivial ?

Mr. Baxter : I do not think I can mention one that is not trivial, and that is what impresses me. It is evident from the very fact that these trivial complaints have been made that the Faipules are disliked and distrusted by the Samoans. If the Faipules had the confidence of the Samoans and were liked and trusted by them, then these trivial complaints would not be brought up against them ; but that dislike and distrust caused the Samoans to bring forward these complaints. The Mau cannot be blamed for that, because these complaints of the Natives are not natural to the Mau, and from the diversity of the matters which they cover and from the personal nature of the majority of them it is clear that the Mau did not suggest them. It comes back to the same thing : the Natives consider that the Faipules are put in power by the Administrator and are removable only by the Administrator, and obey the instructions of the Administrator, and are consequently Government officials.

Some of the charges might have been regarded as serious had they been supported by the evidence. If the Faipules had been shown, as was suggested, to have been usurping or interfering with the functions and duties of other Native officials, particularly of the Native Magistrates, such conduct would have been highly objectionable, and would have tended to disrupt the system of local government.

Some very general allegations were made against certain of the Faipules, such as that they were overbearing towards the Natives of their districts. On investigation this very general charge was disproved, and usually turned out to be based on the attempt of the Faipule to dissuade Natives from joining the Mau. General charges were laid against one or two Faipules that they were lazy or deaf, but no proof of any neglect on their part to perform their duty was given.

The most general complaint was the alleged failure to bring complaints from chiefs and District Councils before the Fono of Faipules. These complaints usually related to the medical tax and to *malagas*, or journeys for the presentation of "fine mats." The evidence satisfied us that these complaints were wholly unfounded, and that the Faipules did their duty in properly transmitting all matters submitted to them for consideration by the Fono. It is to be remembered that the medical tax and *malagas* concerning "fine mats" were constantly, in one way or another, being considered or discussed by District Councils and the Fono of Faipules. There is also the significant admission that no single complaint was made either to the Faipule concerned, or to the Secretary of Native Affairs, or to the Administrator as to any omission in this respect on the part of any Faipule. We are satisfied that had there been ground for complaint there would have been no hesitancy on the part of the chiefs to make a complaint through one or the other of the channels we have mentioned.

It will have been seen already that the very triviality of these complaints was relied upon by Mr. Baxter for the contention that the Faipules were disliked and distrusted by the Samoans. It is to be remembered that these complaints were not heard of until the organization of the Mau came into operation, and the true inference must be that all attempts to justify such complaints failed. We cannot assent to Mr. Baxter's logic, and think that the trivial nature of the complaints made to support the recent objections to the Faipule shows that the complaints were foundationless. In Appendix III will be found examples of the charges made against Faipules, and the answers to or explanations of such charges.

4. MEDICAL TAX.

The next matter to be considered is the imposition of the medical tax. The history of this tax may be thus stated : It is to be remembered that the Samoa Act of 1921 imposes upon the Administrator the duty of establishing and main-