

APIA, MONDAY, 26TH SEPTEMBER.

OPENING ADDRESSES OF COUNSEL.

Mr. Baxter: According to the permission granted by you on Saturday, I propose to deal with the points which I have worked up myself; Mr. Slipper will deal with the other points taken. First, the birth and growth of the Mau. The main witnesses on this point will be the members of the committee themselves, and evidence will also be sought from the Natives who come into Court. It is essential in dealing with this subject that I should deal fully with it for the purpose of indicating to the Commission the attitude of the gentlemen who form it. I wish to show particularly by the evidence which will be called that the movement is entirely constitutional and law-abiding. Dealing with the history of it, in August, 1926, Mr. Nelson returned from New Zealand after having had an interview with the Prime Minister, the Minister of External Affairs, and the Minister in Charge of the Cook Islands. He called together his colleagues on the Legislative Council and one or two other gentlemen, and informed them that he was given to understand at this interview that the Minister of External Affairs would very shortly be visiting Samoa to hold an inquiry into the state of affairs here. For that reason he called them together to see what course should be followed for the purpose of arranging material to place before the Minister. This preliminary committee, as it might be called, decided that a public meeting should be called to ascertain the true wishes of the people. Before the meeting was called, however, several Samoans approached various members of the committee and stated that they also had grievances which they wished to bring before the Minister, but they did not quite know how to go about it without some assistance. These Samoans were informed that the elected members could not say how that could be done, as they were calling a public meeting to decide what course would be followed. On the 15th October, 1926, a public meeting was called and held in the Market Hall. Various members of the committee prepared papers on various subjects for the purpose of reading them, and so encouraging discussion and ascertaining the true wishes of the people. Before the meeting actually was called a wireless had been received from Wellington stating that the Minister would not be in Samoa until the autumn. However, the meeting continued, and it was resolved that a wireless be sent to the Minister suggesting perhaps that he might come earlier. A committee was elected after a discussion, consisting of the three elected members—Messrs. Nelson, Williams, and Westbrook; six Europeans—Messrs. Gurr, Smyth, Myer, Cobcroft, S. H. Meredith, and myself; and six Samoan members—namely, Faumuina, Tuisila, Lago Lago (otherwise known as Afamasaga), AINU'U, Tofaeono, and Alipia. Anybody who wished to speak spoke at the meeting; there was no dominance of the meeting in any way at all, and the meeting was orderly throughout. I might mention at this date, so as to clear the matter, that I later resigned from this committee on account of business reasons. After the first meeting the wireless resolved on was sent, and a reply was received to the effect that the Minister would be in Samoa in May. The committee, however, had started the preparation of material and decided to go ahead with it. The matters they were preparing papers on were—(1) Agriculture, (2) finance, (3) medical, (4) Legislative Council, (5) Native policy, and (6) prohibition. For this purpose the committee had divided itself into subdivisions, and the Europeans considered matters separately from the Samoans. In the report placed before the Council there is a separate European report and a separate Samoan report. Messrs. Cobcroft and Meyer advised the committee that they were unable to retain their seats on the committee so far as the committee was going to discuss Native policy, but they were prepared to remain with the committee for the discussion of other matters. On the 12th November, 1926, the committee called a second meeting for the purpose of reporting on the work done and to ascertain what course should be followed in view of the information that the Minister would not be here until May. This meeting was well conducted; the police were largely in evidence, and notebooks were very prominent. The chairman of the meeting, Mr. Nelson, had hardly opened his mouth when he was interrupted by the Acting-Secretary, who said he had a message to read from His Excellency the Administrator. This message was read, and the message referred to page 20 of the Report of the Proceedings of the Parliamentary Committee (see Exhibit No. 52). This was somewhat uncalled-for, as the presence of the police and the reading of this message were regarded by the meeting as an endeavour to stifle it. However, the meeting, after a discussion, decided that while His Excellency the Administrator, as the representative of the King and the country, was supreme and could not in any way be criticized, yet, as his own Prime Minister and the man responsible for the policy of the country, he should not object to that policy being criticized in a constitutional manner. The meeting therefore proceeded, and during its proceedings decided to send a delegation to New Zealand to place the reports before the Minister of External Affairs. The meeting was entirely orderly throughout. After this meeting there was a considerable number of rumours and half-truths floating round as to what had actually happened—particularly among the Native community. The committee therefore prepared and published a short *résumé* of what had been done at the meeting. In view of the necessity for collecting funds for the purpose of sending delegations to New Zealand, and in view of the necessity of showing that the meeting was entirely constitutional in every way, it was deemed necessary to send a couple of delegates to Savai'i. Faumuina and AINU'U, two Native members of the committee, were selected to proceed to Savai'i for the purpose of collecting any funds that were voluntarily offered, and also for the purpose of telling the people about this meeting. However, His Excellency the Administrator invoked the powers given to him under the Samoan Offenders Ordinance of 1922, and issued what is generally known as banishment orders against these two gentlemen. AINU'U was stopped from going at the Customhouse here by the Chief of Police, but Faumuina had already gone to Savai'i, where the Chief of Police had followed him, and from where he came back. Just about this time Tofaeono, another Native member of the committee, had to resign from his position as Government Copra Inspector on account of his sitting on the committee, and he was called before the Secretary of Native Affairs and