

position that he should be sometimes required to sit on the Legislative Council and hear discussions concerning Ordinances and the reason for their being brought in, and then be asked to sit on the Bench and adjudicate on them. Generally I might say that the Legislative Council is not expressive of the country, and that it is entirely dominated by the Administrator. It is in effect a one-man show. Turning now to the subject of Native affairs: This is a difficult and complicated matter to deal with, and, while I know the lines along which I propose to lead evidence myself and lines upon which I propose to cross-examine, I cannot say what the Natives themselves will say when they are in the box; but the evidence will be led—or, rather, the expert evidence that will be called will be that given by Mr. Gurr and Mr. Nelson, and probably a Samoan to show what is the Native social system—the *fa'a-Samoa* system of government—and that the present system is repugnant to the Natives, and clashes with their own inherent ideas of the rights and authorities of the Natives. Native evidence will be called showing that dissatisfaction was amongst the Samoans before the 15th October, 1926—that is when the first meeting was held—and was largely due to the medical tax (which I have previously mentioned), the Faipules and their way of exercising their duties (as I will mention more in detail later), and the exercising of the powers contained in the Samoan Offenders Ordinance called “banishment orders.” I will also refer to what is generally known as the “emblems of sovereignty,” or “emblems of authority,” which is very often referred to. This refers to a gift of a *kava* bowl and various other Native articles to the Governor-General. The Natives resented the speech made by the Chairman of the Faipules, and they have, rightly or wrongly, looked upon it as a sort of ceding of the sovereignty of Samoa to New Zealand. They have regarded it from that point of view. The evidence will show that this has caused considerable unrest, and it will be claimed that the Natives were not consulted before that was done by the Faipules. It was done by the Faipules without the knowledge or consent of the Natives as a whole. The question of “fine mats” will also come up. I do not know the details of that, but it has something to do with the repression of gifts of “fine mats.” There is a ceremony when a chief dies, and a present of “fine mats” takes place, and this also applies in the case of marriage, and tributes are paid in connection with the presentation of those mats. I may say that it was considered that too much time was spent, and the custom was suppressed by the Government for the purpose of saving this waste of time. In connection with this matter of the “fine mats” presentation detailed evidence will be given from the Natives themselves; I cannot say exactly what it is. It will be submitted that it was a cause of unrest, and whether it was a good policy to follow or a bad policy to follow I am unable to say. If it was a good policy then there should have been a period of education before it was brought in. Another point that has raised considerable feeling among the Natives is the idea of individualization of land titles. The experts mentioned before that I propose to call will show that the system of land-tenure in *fa'a-Samoa* is that the land belongs to the family and under the control of the head of the family, or the *matai*. He has the complete *pule* of the land, but he must look after his family and he must work on the land. The proposal of the Government was to allocate 10 acres of land to each man, so that each man would have his own piece of land and consequently be encouraged to work upon it and look after it for himself, but it would not be under control of the family. The scheme clashes very fiercely with the Samoan idea of the family control of the land. They base all their importance upon the land. They place considerable weight on the fact of whether the family has much land or not, and they object very much to parting with possession of this land. It is quite probable and quite possible that when they come to divide up these lands into 10-acre lots the family of one *matai* would find that they had not sufficient land to divide up into 10-acre lots. If *matai* B has not got enough land some land would have to be taken from *matai* A and given to *matai* B so as to give every man his 10-acre subdivision.

*The Chairman*: Has this scheme been brought down in any concrete shape?

*Mr. Baxter*: Yes.

*The Chairman*: In what shape?

*Mr. Baxter*: It has been brought down, and is mentioned in some of the regulations that were brought down by the Government, and it has been discussed in the Fono of Faipules.

*The Chairman*: That is not an answer to my question. Has the Administrator brought down any concrete scheme to give effect to what, no doubt, was under consideration by some one or other?

*Mr. Baxter*: I have not seen the scheme.

*The Chairman*: How do you suggest that it comes within the scope of this Commission?

*Mr. Baxter*: It is mentioned in the Minister's reply.

*The Chairman*: But that does not bring it within the scope of this Commission.

*Mr. Baxter*: It is also mentioned in the report as one of the complaints.

*The Chairman*: To what report do you refer?

*Mr. Baxter*: What is generally called the committee's report—that is, the report that was put forward by the committee to the Minister.

*The Chairman*: It looks as if it was a scheme in the clouds.

*Mr. Baxter*: But it is a ground on which trouble has arisen—it is one of the causes of the present trouble.

*The Chairman*: We do not want to unduly limit you—we have already allowed considerable liberty; but my recollection is that this matter to which you are now referring is not a complaint or an objection made to the Government of New Zealand or to the Parliament of New Zealand.

*Mr. Baxter*: No, sir, except that it appears in the Minister's letter, as I am pretty certain it does, and the Minister's letter was made a portion of the parliamentary paper.