

Can you say whether the Samoans naturally are a drinking race?—No, they are not—not of intoxicants.

*Kava*, of course?—Yes.

What is your opinion about the present position: do you think that the present system of prohibition should or should not continue?—That is rather a wide question for me to answer.

*The Chairman*: You may feel a difficulty about answering that question in your official position, and you are not required to answer it if you do not wish, although I am not going to stop you if you wish to answer it; but witness must not be put in a position in which he feels it may injure him if he expresses his opinion one way or the other.

*Mr. Slipper*.] I would not have advanced as far as that only that Mr. Braisby prepared a report in 1926 on the subject for the Administration. However, you would rather not answer the question, Mr. Braisby?—No; if any opinion is to be given, I consider that it should be given by the Administration from my report. When I prepared that report, it was for the information of the Secretary to the Administration.

*The Chairman*.] Has it been published?—No, it has not been published; so far as I am concerned, it is still in the hands of the Administration.

*Mr. Slipper*: I am not putting it in, sir.

*The Chairman*: No. It can be regarded as a confidential paper.

[A return showing the amount of liquor issued by the permits of the police for February, 1920, and April, 1920, was put in and marked "Exhibit No. 6."]

*Mr. Braisby*: You are not interested in returns of liquor offences?

*Mr. Slipper*: I think their Honours should have a return of that.

*The Chairman*: Yes, put it in. [Exhibit No. 7.]

*Mr. Meredith*.] According to this return, Mr. Braisby, the total convictions for drunkenness in the twelve months ending 1926 were five, and as far as Samoan consumption of liquor was concerned there was no evidence at all?—No.

Those five cases of drunkenness—who would they be amongst: what kind of people were they—European or half-castes?—They were Samoans and half-castes, and one case of a European. The "drunks" were in three cases out of five the result of drinking methylated spirits.

Can I put to you this: that as far as Apia is concerned, in all cases, whether crowded or otherwise, there are no signs of drunkenness among the people in the streets?—No, there are no signs of drunkenness.

Speaking generally, there are no signs of liquor among the people moving about Apia?—That is so. It is exceptional.

Exceptionally so, you mean?—Yes, exceptionally so.

The Samoan—the real Samoan—does not like intoxicating liquor, does he?—No, not the real Samoan; he does not understand it.

Do you know whether the Fono of Faipules has considered this question?—I do not know.

When you speak about the distillation of spirits from cocoa, that was some time ago, was it not?—That commenced in 1921. By the end of 1922 it had practically ceased.

That had practically ceased?—Yes; it revived occasionally, but not as a rule.

As far as you know, it is not existent now?—No.

With regard to home brew, that can be made, and it is intended to be made, under 3 per cent.?—Yes, that is so.

But, of course, as you say, it can be made stronger if a person deliberately wishes to do so?—Yes, sir, if he wishes to do so.

By putting in other ingredients?—Yes, adding sugar.

If this were often done, would you not expect to see some signs of men under liquor?—Yes.

But you do not see them?—No; it is the exception to see men in Apia showing signs of drinking.

Have you seen the report sent in by the Citizens Committee?—Yes, I have read it in parliamentary paper A.—4B. It says, "As for the effect on the Samoan, only the most prejudiced would attempt to gainsay the fact that the law has had the most adverse effect on the Samoans, who have nearly all learnt to make and drink 'home-brew.'"

You say that is not a correct statement of fact?—No, it is not a correct statement of fact.

I suppose you are among the Natives fairly frequently, and among other villages?—Yes.

Now, another paragraph here says, "As for the Europeans, the result has been most deplorable. Hardly one who has any taste for beer, wine, or spirits at all has not broken the law in some way. Most, if not all, make and/or consume locally manufactured liquor in some form or another. It is doubtful if any one would resist a chance to smuggle liquor when the occasion arises." Do you think that is a fair and correct description of the European population in Apia?—No; it is extreme. There is a good number of people here who would not smuggle liquor if they got the opportunity.

You think that there are people in Apia who are prepared to obey the law?—I think that the biggest majority would try and obey the law as far as they could. I suppose everybody technically breaks the law at some time in some way or another.

I am speaking of this matter in particular just now: is it correct to say that every European here would smuggle liquor if he got the chance?—No, sir, he would not.

You consider that is going wide of the mark?—Yes, sir, I do.

THOMAS HENRY BATES sworn and examined.

*Mr. Slipper*.] What is your occupation?—The Collector of Customs.

Have you any returns with you as to the imports of liquor here?—This is the statement showing the import of spirits and liquor from 1926–1927 inclusive. [Exhibit No. 8.]

You were previously in Tonga?—Yes.