

So these reports would be explained, of course, in detail to the Samoans, the Samoan members of the committee?—That is so.

And would the Samoans generally who attended the meeting, and the Samoan members of the committee, be assured by you that all these various reports were true?—They would be taken for granted as being true.

The Samoan, we have been told, is suspicious by nature?—Yes.

And you and the other members of the European committee were all aware of that?—Yes, we know of that peculiarity of the Samoans.

And knowing that you would be extremely careful to see that he is not misled?—That is so.

And you would appreciate the responsibility of not misleading him?—Yes, that is so.

Well, I put it to you that you would be extremely careful that there would be no possibility of misleading him?—We would certainly be careful.

I think you have told us that the basis of your report was a comparison between Samoa, Fiji, and Tonga?—That is so.

With the intention of showing that the expenditure here is more lavish than in the two other places?—Yes, that is the object of the figures.

And I take it you should have been careful to see your figures were accurate?—We exercised all the care we could at the time—at the time we prepared it.

Did you and Mr. Smyth ever go into the various figures?—I received the reports after he had prepared them. First of all he and I conferred together and we went into the matter of drawing up the reports, and then he requested me to draw it up, and I submitted it to him.

And did he check everything?—That I cannot say.

And did Mr. Nelson and Mr. Westbrook and the other members of the European committee go over it before it was discussed with the Samoans?—I cannot say that. I passed it to Mr. Smyth, and he handed it to Mr. Nelson.

So Mr. Nelson had it before it was brought up officially before the committee?—Yes.

And did he have any discussion with you prior to bringing it before the public meeting?—I do not recollect any discussion.

At what time was this financial report discussed by the whole committee before it was adopted by them as their report?—I cannot tell you at what time.

Was it ever discussed by the whole committee before its adoption?—It was at the meeting in November. I read the report before the whole of the public.

The committee as a committee did not discuss it at any time?—The report was handed round. I do not recollect a combined discussion amongst ourselves.

Why I ask these questions, Mr. Gurr, is that on page 13 you have there said, in dealing with the public debt of £100,000, "The property which was pledged for the repayment of this loan of £100,000 upon which the New Zealand Government has already received interest and part sinking fund, amounting to the sum of £28,997, is now, by the action of the New Zealand Government, the property of that Government. The New Zealand Government has in plain language foreclosed on the secured property. It is submitted that the loan now should be wiped out, and we recommend that the Administration be requested to apply to the New Zealand Government for a release of the loan or mortgage debt. . . . A mortgagee having foreclosed on the property which was secured by a loan of £100,000, and having become the owner of the property without further payment, appears to be in an anomalous position when he continues to carry on the loan whilst he possesses the property which was secured for the repayment of the loan." You know, Mr. Gurr, that that was entirely false?—I do know now.

Then why do you put that suggestion in the report? What steps did you take to find out? Why did you take the responsibility of putting that suggestion in the report?—I believed it was true. I based it on the information I got from members of the committee.

Who gave you the information, or the so-called information, of the so-called mortgage?—I recollect Mr. Cobcroft raised the question, and from what was said at the meeting this article was based.

Was Mr. Nelson, or Mr. Westbrook, or Mr. Williams present at that meeting?—Yes.

Did any one of them correct him when he said it?—I did not hear any corrections.

Do you suggest that they, as members of the Legislative Council, were not aware of the facts of this £100,000?—I cannot say.

You never discussed it with them?—No, not conjointly.

If you had any doubts at all or your committee, there were three members of the Legislative Council—why did you not ask them?—No doubt arose in my mind at all. I assumed it was correct.

Why did you put "This last paragraph is not, probably, in accordance with facts" if you had no doubt? These are the words in your report?—We felt that there was certain information that had not been disclosed to the committee.

Why do you use these words, "it is probably not in accordance with facts"?—I think it alludes to the reference to this item about the mortgage.

Do you suggest that it means that your legal analogy may be incorrect? Did you approach the Secretary to the Administration or any other responsible officer to ascertain the facts?—No, we did not.

But you were prepared to send that report out to the Samoans without making any inquiries from responsible officers of the Administration?—We had no doubt about the debt of £100,000.

I am speaking about paragraph 2, the clause dealing with the public debt?—This is a matter one would not discuss with Samoans.

You have published it to the Samoans?—That special clause would not be discussed with the Samoans; they would not understand it.