

Did you examine the rise in expenditure of Fiji for the same period?—I do not recall doing that.

You have made comparisons between Samoa and Fiji right through this criticism, have you not?—Yes, we have.

Why did you not make the comparison in this case?—We did not deem that necessary. We did not want to go through the whole finance of Fiji and this place. We wanted to give the Minister sufficient data to satisfy him that there was a reasonable request for an investigation into the expenditure of this country.

Right through you have used a comparison between Fiji and Tonga?—Yes.

Would you expect to find a similar increase in Fiji in the rise in expenditure between that period?—Not necessarily.

You did not examine it?—I did not examine it at that time.

*The Chairman.*] Or since?—No, nor since, sir. In fact, I might say that from the time this was prepared until the night before last I had not seen the report.

*Mr. Meredith.*] The committee received a reply on various points from the Minister, did they not, Mr. Gurr?—Only by a letter received by the last mail.

But did you get a detailed reply from Mr. Nosworthy some time ago?—No, sir. We were promised one, but we did not get it.

What was the date of that reply?—It was some time after the arrival of the “Tofua” before last.

Assuming that you only got it then, did you not check your report off with it as a result of questions raised in that reply?—I did not do it at that time. I was expecting Mr. Smyth to be here, and he was the one to take up the question of finance, but owing to the absence of Mr. Smyth I was asked to give the explanation.

Did you prepare the report?—I prepared it from the data that had been collected at the time, and undertook to draw up the report from the information given me.

*The Chairman.*] Whose was the first signature on the report?—I cannot recollect.

*Mr. Meredith.*] Will you admit that if there was a similar rise of expenditure in Fiji the basis of criticism must simply fall to the ground?—No, I will not admit that. I would like to see Appendices A and B to refresh my memory, but I have looked through these papers here and I cannot see the Appendix A or Appendix B.

Just as a matter of interest, Mr. Gurr, that is your signature [report handed to Mr. Gurr for his examination]?—Yes.

That is the actual report?—Yes.

Yours was the first signature?—Yes.

*The Chairman.*] It is referred to throughout as Messrs. Gurr's and Smyth's report?—The typing of it was done at my office, so I naturally signed it first.

You said in your evidence here that you were responsible, did you not?—Yes.

You cannot drag Mr. Smyth in to excuse yourself, Mr. Gurr?—No, sir.

*Mr. Meredith.*] Referring to page 6, at the bottom of the page, you have made a comparative statement of revenue and expenditure per head for Samoa, Fiji, and Tonga: can you tell me how you arrive at the expenditure per head of Fiji?—In the same manner that I explained yesterday.

Do you mind working it out? Your figures may be correct; it is possible that I have calculated it wrongly. [An explanation and discussion of figures took place at this stage.] Then the correct figure is £2 16s. per head?—Yes, deducting the surplus.

And not £2 4s., as shown in your report?—That would be so.

*The Chairman.*] This refers to expenditure?—Yes, expenditure per head.

[Calculations shown and explained to the Chairman by Mr. Meredith.]

It must have been an arithmetical blunder?—I am afraid I had not taken the surplus into consideration at the time.

Not at all; the surplus would have made it worse?—I would just like to check it to see how the £2 4s. got there. I want to see if that is £3 4s., or something else.

*Mr. Meredith.*] Might I ask you who checked the figures in these returns?—I worked them out to the best of my knowledge, and I believe that they were worked out by Mr. Smyth.

Can you suggest that these figures were checked, with a plain blunder like that in them?—It may have been an error in the typing.

*The Chairman.* : You have read the original report: is it a printer's error?

*Mr. Baxter.* : No; it is £2 4s. in the typewritten copy.

*The Chairman.* : We will not waste any more time on this topic.

*Witness.* : I think that it should have been £3 4s. there.

*The Chairman.* : Either explanation would be wrong. If you take the total figure of £550,000 it would also be wrong. We simply want to know if you did make a mistake and put it to the public.

*Mr. Meredith.*] On the same page you made a criticism of the proportion of salaries and moneys available for public works and divers other expenses, did you not?—Yes.

You said this: “The sum total under the head of ‘Salaries and public works’ is £81,387 17s. 4d. Deduct £52,952, salaries, &c., of Europeans, and we have £28,435 17s. 4d. for public works and divers other expenses other than salaries paid out in connection with the various Departments and officials. So that out of a revenue of £150,000 there is about £25,000, or one-sixth of the revenue, or less, disbursed for the actual development of public works.” Did you make a comparison of Fiji figures to see how they worked out in Fiji?—No.

Did you make a criticism without a comparison? Can you work it out from these figures before you as to say what Fiji is? [At this stage Mr. Gurr worked out the figures and discussed the matter with Mr. Meredith.] The amount you have to consider, Mr. Gurr, is the amount mentioned as salaries and public works, which is £455,087 3s. 5d.?—I have taken salaries and deducted it from £81,387.