

Mr. HORN: He has been here seven years?—Yes.

Is he a married man?—No.

How much money has he sent to China during those seven years?—£15.

Mr. HOLLAND: How was the fact that they were wanted for Samoa brought under their notice when they were first recruited?—They noticed an advertisement in the newspaper.

Did they engage through the Chinese Government at that time?—They thought they were engaged under the Chinese Government.

Mr. YOUNG: But were they engaged with the approval of the Chinese Government?—Yes, if they approved of them.

It was an arrangement between the Chinese Government and the German Government at the time?—I think so.

When they were engaged first their wages were £1 a month practically?—20 marks.

Did the wages go up under the Ordinance, or did the wages go up by reason of these men becoming free men and reindenturing themselves at a higher rate than the original arrangement provided for?—Because they had the right of reindenture, to find which master they wanted.

Mr. YOUNG: At that re-engagement was he a more proficient workman than when he came to the country at first, and would he be worth more money in consequence?—Yes.

Hon. Sir R. H. RHODES: Had he no increase in pay before his first term of indenture was up?—Not until the term expired.

Mr. HOLLAND: The point I want to get at is whether there was ever any change made in the wages by Ordinance or not, and I think his answer is that there was no increase made by Ordinance?—Not by Ordinance.

Mr. WRIGHT: Do they like the task system?—Yes.

Mr. HOLLAND: When did his first contract expire?—The term was for three years.

That would be four years ago, as he has been here seven years, and he has reindentured twice since the expiry of his first contract?—Six times.

They were six-months contracts?—Yes.

He started with £1 a month. What wages did he get when he made his second contract at the end of the three years?—45 marks, or £2 5s.

And he is getting £2 10s. now?—He is getting £3 10s. now; he has to provide his own food.

Mr. SIDEX: He does not pay for his rice?—The master provides them with rice, tea, and petroleum. All the other things they have to provide for themselves.

Mr. HORN: Under his first indenture he had to be sent back free in the ship?—Yes.

How is he situated now supposing a ship were available: would he go back free or would he have to pay?—If their contract expires the master has to pay their passage.

Mr. LUKE: He came out in the first place for three years; then he signed on for another period: would the employer be liable to send him back to China on the expiration of the second term?—Yes.

Mr. HOLLAND: Only one of these men is married. Will you ask them if they have gone with Samoan women in the meantime or whether they have lived quite apart from them?—They cannot speak Samoan. They have never mixed with the Samoan women.

Mr. YOUNG: Does he know of any China boys who, if they pay money to Samoan women, can get what they want?—They cannot say. They have had no experience themselves.

Mr. REED: He spoke of their doing "miscellaneous jobs" in China: will he particularize?—They mean work as farmers—rural workers.

A further Chinese labourer (No. 1416) was questioned through the Chinese interpreter.

Mr. REED: How much money was he given on the first indenture?—15 marks a month.

How much is he getting to-day?—£5 a month.

How long has he been here?—Thirteen or fourteen years.

Mr. T. W. RHODES: Why is he getting so much more money than when he first came?—Because he is a mechanic and is more proficient.

Was he a mechanic when he came at first?—He signed a contract as a mechanic, but he could not find his job when he got here.

Mr. SIDEX: Is he married?—He has a wife in Samoa, but not one in China.

Did he have to pay the father before he got married?—No.

Did he have any marriage ceremony?—No.

Has he any children?—No.

If he goes back to China will he leave his wife here?—If he has money he would take his wife back to China.

Hon. Sir R. H. RHODES: How long has he been married?—About two years.

Mr. SIDEX: Has he any complaint to make?—He signed a contract as a mechanic, but now he has not got the job of mechanic. He has to chop firewood and do some other hard work.

Hon. Sir R. H. RHODES: What sort of mechanic is he?—In connection with the cocoa-machines.

Mr. T. W. RHODES: Does he not attend to that machine when it is working?—He is not told to do so now.

Is there another mechanic, then, here working?—Yes, another Chinaman is doing the work now.

Hon. Sir R. H. RHODES: Is he getting more wages now than he would as a mechanic?—He is worth more than the £5.

When his work was changed did he complain to the Commissioner?—No.

Why did he not?—He was too far away.

Mr. T. W. RHODES: Has this other Chinaman, whom we have not questioned yet, any complaints?—No.

What money does he receive?—£3 10s.