

Mr. ANDERSON (to Mr. Morley): Do you find the Solomon Islanders are as good as the coolies?—They are better. It is difficult to get the number.

Is there a prejudice against them?—There is no prejudice here against them.

Mr. HOLLAND: Have the Samoans raised any objection?—The Samoans themselves have up to the present not raised any objection.

Mr. ANDERSON (to Mr. Morley): Does the Samoan have any prejudice against his women going with the black boys?—It is only very rarely that the black boys do go with them.

The Samoans look down upon them, I suppose?—Yes.

They do not look down on the Chinese?—To a certain extent they do.

What class of Samoan woman goes into these compounds?—In some cases fairly decent girls go with the labourers. It is generally arranged by their parents.

Mr. WRIGHT: The parents evidently offer no objection?—When a Samoan woman goes with a Chinaman it is generally arranged by the parents, *faa Samoa*.

Mr. ANDERSON: The parents generally get a consideration from the coolie?—Yes; in fact, in all cases.

Mr. HOLLAND: Has it anything to do with the Chinese custom in China?

Mr. KERSLAKE: I do not know.

The CHINESE INTERPRETER: According to Chinese law the man must ask permission from the head of the family—that is the father, or, if he is dead, the elder brother. The arrangement must be made between the parents on both sides.

Mr. WRIGHT: Does the young man have to make any present to the parents of the girl?

The CHINESE INTERPRETER: Through the parents.

APIA, 9TH MARCH, 1920.

INSPECTION OF PLANTATIONS.

VISIT TO D.H. AND P.G.'S MULIFANUA PLANTATION, NOW UNDER CONTROL OF NEW ZEALAND MILITARY LIQUIDATOR.

After a tour of inspection through the plantation the party adjourned to the manager's residence, where the Hon. Sir James Allen announced that the manager, Mr. Helg, would be prepared to answer any questions that the members cared to address to him. The following conference took place:—

Hon. Sir JAMES ALLEN: How long is it since the plantation was started?—In 1870—fifty years ago. At the present time there are 4,200 acres under cultivation.

How many labourers had you here when the war broke out?—320 black boys. Up to the present we have always employed black boys. To-day we have 145 black boys.

How many overseers are there on the property?—There are nine white, half-caste, and three-quarter-caste overseers, and three carpenters. They are good men if they do not get too much liquor.

How have you been able to keep the plantation up to its present condition during the war with these fewer labourers?—By the help of my great experience. The cattle have also been a great help. When I took over the plantation we had twelve hundred head of cattle: to-day we have nearly four thousand. When the war broke out we had four thousand five hundred head, and the difference in the number to-day is due to the supply of beef to oblige the military authorities during the occupation.

How much labour is required to keep the plantation up to its present state of cultivation?—At least 280 black boys are required to keep the plantation in the state in which you see it to-day.

If it is desired to break in new country, how many boys would be required to each 100 acres?—140 boys are required to keep 400 acres in cultivation—that is, if they are under good sober white control.

For each new 100 hundred acres broken in how many extra boys would be required?—Fifteen would do.

I understand you have had experience of black boys and Chinese: which do you consider better labourers?—I have had experience of Chinese, and I consider they are far behind the black boys. For one thing it takes much longer to make the Chinese understand what you want. It takes at least two years to make the Chinese understand, but the black boys are able to understand very much quicker, and are able to make themselves understood.

You know that the black boys have to be repatriated and that we cannot get any more of them. How many Chinese will you require to take their places?—In my opinion the plantation will require about 75 per cent. more Chinese than black boys to do the same amount of work. In other words, the plantation will require 175 Chinese for every 100 black boys.

If you cannot get black boys and if you cannot get Chinese, is it not possible to get Samoans?—I do not believe so. At present I have twenty-five or thirty working on the plantation.

Do they work regularly?—No; I never can depend upon them.

What work do they do?—Copra-cutting.

Will they do anything else?—I do not think so. Lately I made a contract with ten Natives to lay water-pipes on the plantation. I offered them 3s. per day and food. The *pulinu'u* came and offered to make this contract, and the Samoans said they would be on the plantation on Monday afternoon at 4 o'clock in order to start work at 6 o'clock the following morning. They did not arrive, but came on Tuesday morning about 7.30, and when I complained of their want of punctuality they told me that if that did not suit me they would go; and they went.