

settled, whom will it include? It will include whites—British, Germans, others; it will include half-castes; it will include Natives. And what is to be the franchise? Who is to vote? These difficulties have all to be settled before you can become a municipality. I am in sympathy with the idea, but I do not think it is feasible until we get these other questions settled. We want more experience before we shall feel justified in passing an Order in Council which will authorize the setting-up of a municipal body in Apia. Have any of you considered the franchise—who is to get the vote? Are whites of all classes to get the vote if they are ratepayers? Are the Natives to get the vote and the half-castes? Have you considered it?

Mr. NELSON: It seems to me that the ratepayers would get the vote.

Hon. Sir JAMES ALLEN: Natives or otherwise?—Not Natives, because the Natives are supposed to have their own privileges reserved for them.

I think it will be plain to members of Parliament that that raises a very serious question which we shall require to consider very carefully in New Zealand before we can consent to a municipality being established. I should also ask, Would the half-castes have a vote?—Yes; they are considered Europeans in Samoa.

Hon. Sir JAMES ALLEN: We realize the very many difficulties, and we cannot commit ourselves until we see the solution of the difficulties.

Mr. WRIGHT: Would the committee be agreeable, if there were a municipality as they suggest, to allow the Samoans to elect one or more members, according to arrangement, to the municipality—the Samoans who are ratepayers in the municipality?—If the Natives become ratepayers I should think there should be no objection to their having representation; but they would not be compulsorily ratepayers, according to the pamphlet.

Mr. YOUNG: On page 26 it is stated: "The property within the area is assessed at about a quarter of a million sterling. A small tax on property alone would make an ample basis for funds." Is there included in that quarter of a million sterling the Native property within the proposed area? If so, do we understand from this statement that you propose to rate Native property?

Mr. MACDONALD: The amount mentioned there includes all the property within the proposed area—Native, European, and half-caste.

Mr. YOUNG: Do we understand, from the motive and ideas of those who are promoting municipal government here, that you will put a small tax on property, including Native property, within the proposed area?

Mr. NELSON: No, not on Native property.

Mr. YOUNG: What is the value of these figures if you do not give us the actual rateable value upon which you are going to base your revenue? Can you give us some idea of the value of the property which you propose to rate for the purpose of carrying on government?

Mr. MACDONALD: I think I answered that question before—that I cannot from memory give the figures, but I will do so later.

A FREE PRESS: SECTION 102 OF THE SAMOA CONSTITUTION ORDER.

Mr. HOLLAND: Might I ask the Administrator if it is proposed to continue the censorship under the Civil administration? There is a statement here on page 27 that "at a meeting of the directors of the *Samoa Times* and the Administrator, at which Judge Watson was present, held on the 23rd December, in the course of a discussion on the censorship the Administrator stated that it might be necessary to continue the censorship of the paper under Civil administration." Is that so?

Hon. Sir JAMES ALLEN: I think I had better answer that question myself. I will answer it presently.

Mr. HOLLAND: I wanted to follow that up with another question. Can we not have that before we go into the general matter? I suggest that if the Administrator or the Minister can tell us that it is not proposed to continue the censorship, that might considerably shorten the proceedings with regard to this matter.

Hon. Sir JAMES ALLEN: I have no desire to shorten the proceedings. I want the fullest information myself before I give an answer.

Mr. HOLLAND: Then I should like to ask from the committee for a statement, to some extent in detail, of their complaints with regard to the censorship—a statement of the disabilities under which they claim they have suffered in connection with the censorship.

Mr. E. A. DOBBIE (Editor of the *Samoa Times*): This matter is a very vexed one locally, and one on which I can speak with some feeling. I have had a good deal of experience of censorships in London and New Zealand. I was the editor of a paper in New Zealand, and with regard to the censorship I have been put under here I have no hesitation in saying that I very strongly doubt if there is such another censorship in the whole world. In my opinion it is puerile foolishness. In the period since I have been here—during the past eight months—there have been four Censors. Amongst them have been Censors and Censors. I am a Britisher out-and-out, and a New-Zealander. I understood fully when I came down here that I was taking charge of a paper which catered for a cosmopolitan community. Prior to my coming to Samoa I was in the service of the Tongan Government as Government Printer. When I came here I had had some knowledge of Native life in Tonga—I had made a study of it. When I came here I knew I was in a strange community, a mixed community, and I knew that as editor of a newspaper I had to be very careful how I conducted that paper. I do not think up to the present, even with the censorship, any one can say I have not conducted that paper wholly and solely in the interests of this community and of New Zealand. This paper, of which I am part owner in association with another member of the committee, is temperate and mild; but if I were to give you gentlemen the experiences I have had under this censorship you would hardly credit them.