

Hon. Mr. TRIGGS: Would the directors of the *Samoa Times*, and the white residents generally who are interested in the freedom of the Press, be satisfied if the censorship were removed and a stringent law inserted in the Code against anything calculated to excite disaffection, or anything of a seditious nature? Would that meet the case? In that case you would take the risk of whatever was published, and the Magistrate would act as censor if you overstepped the law?—I think that at once time the *Samoa Times* Company was almost given the option of going along without censorship but with a strict interpretation of clause 102, which is a facsimile of a clause in the Crimes Act in New Zealand. If the company had been prepared to put up with that condition—that the interpretation would be a strict one—I believe the censorship would have been removed. But after an experience of one of the Censors who was censoring my proofs—after an experience of his views on certain matters—I came to the conclusion that with the interpretation which was placed on clause 102 my work would be so difficult that I would not carry on fairly and satisfactorily in the interests of the readers.

Are you not prepared to be subject to the same law that we are subject to in New Zealand?—As I said a moment ago, there is certain matter in the New Zealand papers which would not be allowed in the *Samoa Times*. Therefore a much broader and more liberal interpretation must be given to that clause operating in New Zealand.

Mr. McCOMBS: You do not know.

Mr. DOBBIE: I do not; but according to the interpretation given to us I am inclined to think that the carrying-out of that clause would be very stringent.

Hon. Mr. TRIGGS: I suggest that either you must have a censorship of your articles before they appear or you must subject yourself to the censorship—if I may so call it—of the Magistrate or the Judge in the event of your publishing anything of a seditious nature or calculated to excite disaffection. Which of those two alternatives do you ask for?—It seems as though the carrying-out of that clause would be rather strict, and to safeguard myself I would say it would be better to carry on with the Censor.

Hon. Mr. MICHEL: Are the whole of the directors of the *Samoa Times* British-born subjects or men born in Samoa?—One is Samoan born; all the rest are thoroughly British.

Hon. Mr. GARLAND: In your opinion has the censorship of your paper resulted in any harm or any detriment to the people of Samoa?—Not that I am aware of; but we have a good many growlers here, and if it is a particular growl that a man desires to make he would not send that to the *Samoa Times*, because he would feel that he would not get a fair run owing to the Censor. In regard to loss, there is a loss involved in that.

The growlers are generally individuals?—Exactly. There is a certain loss attached to this censorship, and my paper could not stand the racket that was carried out some weeks ago, when I have to report to my directors that the Censor had cost the little office anything from £15 to £20 in that particular week. After I had finished with the Censor—and I was adamant on a particular point—that Censor went round this town and interviewed all my directors to persuade them to get me into a certain way of thinking. It so delayed my paper that week that I despaired. Had it been delayed another hour I could not have published the paper that week. The delay cost the company anything from £15 to £20.

Mr. YOUNG: Have you absolute editorial control over what appears in the paper?—Occasionally when I feel I want advise I go to one of the members of my directorate.

Do you ever receive instructions from your directors as to what you should put in the paper?—No, but I have been told what they would not like to appear in the paper.

Mr. T. W. RHODES: We mean as to the policy dictated by the directors?—When I was engaged to take control of the paper I was given an entirely free hand.

Mr. YOUNG: Do you not think it would show tact on your part and make for the clearing-up of a lot of the misunderstanding and feeling that appears to exist if you sub-edited all your articles before they were submitted to the Censor?—That is a very good suggestion. I would be quite prepared to do that.

Hon. Mr. GEDDES: Do you make the whole selection of the copy yourself, or have you any one under you in the capacity, let us say, of sub-editor, who occasionally gives out articles or copy to the printer, leaving them to be revised by the editor later on?—No. I am the only European. I have ten Samoan boys under me. I am the reader, reporter, editor, sub-editor, message-boy occasionally, and printer's "devil."

Hon. Sir JAMES ALLEN: I am in favour of a free Press, but not a free Press that is unlicensed. A free Press must "play the game." It has been obvious from this discussion that the complaint that has been made about the Censor is not as solid as it appeared. The articles have been submitted to the Censor without having been read by the editor. May I suggest to the directors that they make the staff strong enough to allow the editor to himself censor articles before they go to the Censor; and I venture to say that if Mr. Dobbie acts in the spirit in which he has met us to-day, the censorship will be practically a dead-letter—he will do it himself. But if you ask me to remove the censorship altogether, I fear that that cannot be done. You must adopt one of the alternatives which the Hon. Mr. Triggs has suggested. You must have the censorship, or you must go before the Magistrate or the Judge regarding material appearing in the paper which is against the law. Either of those two alternatives is open to you, and one must be accepted. Now I want to point out to you the great difference that exists between the publication of newspapers and so on in New Zealand and their publication here. Here we have to deal with a Native population numbering 30,000, and the whites altogether, including half-castes, number 1,606. We have a grave responsibility with regard to the Samoans. If they are to be excited by articles in the newspaper published in this town it is the duty of the Government to see that those articles are restrained; and you must please understand that. As far as the Administrator is concerned, I am quite sure he will deal with you fairly and squarely, and I doubt very much