

"Now, Sir, the people of Samoa await your decision on the representations contained in the reports. Because the people have submitted to the conditions complained of, from year to year, and your Government has turned a deaf ear to their plea, it does not mean that they have lost all sense of their rights and privileges, nor of their being entitled to liberty, freedom, and justice. What ever your decision may be, the grievances represented in the reports have become very deep-rooted, and the people will continue to represent them along constitutional lines until each and every one of them has been set right.

"Practically all the leading Matais of Samoa are now in Apia to await the results of your deliberations. Despite intimidation, coercion, and arbitrary measures by the Administration, which have taxed them to the utmost, they have kept the peace, and will keep the peace no matter what your decision may be, but without prejudice to pressing their complaints until redress has been obtained. They have come to Apia of their own free will, and have lived here at great cost to their friends and themselves. The least consideration of them might have prompted the Administrator to advise you to hold this meeting earlier. For this and all the conditions enumerated to you to-day, which alone have brought matters in Samoa to the present state, neither you nor your Government can escape responsibility.

"With your permission, Chief Faumuina would like to address you on behalf of the committee and in the name of the people."

Mr. Nelson here asked for permission to translate his address to the Samoans present, which was agreed to by the Minister on condition that all references to the Governor-General and to himself should be omitted.

*Hon. Minister* : We will now ask the Natives to speak individually.

*Mr. Nelson* : They would like to have Chief Faumuina speak on their behalf on general matters.

*Hon. Minister* : I want to hear from each one individually what they have to say against the Administration, and I will take a record of it.

*Hon. Minister* : Have you, Tofaeono, any complaint to make against the Government ?

*Tofaeono* : I have no complaint against the Government, except the points already laid before the Minister.

*Hon. Minister* : Why do you belong to the Mau ? What do you want to get through it ?—I object to the taking-away of titles from the chiefs by force, without deliberation or discussion.

Will you state a case ?—There are already cases in the report where chiefs have been banished and their titles taken away by force. It has been the Samoan custom for each family to have the right to deal with its own titles ; but at the present time they have not this right : it has been given to the Faipules.

Whose titles ?—Many Samoan chiefs have been banished and their titles have been taken away.

Who told you that the Faipules took the titles away ?—I know.

They have never taken the titles away, so apparently you know something that is quite wrong ?—I refer to the case of Lagolago.

That is incorrect. Do you know why Lagolago's title was taken away ?—I only heard that the title was taken away, I was not present.

I would advise you to make inquiries.

Ainu'u was the next Native member of the Committee to rise.

*Hon. Minister* : I will ask Mr. McCarthy to put a question or two to Ainu'u.

*Mr. McCarthy* : Have you, yourself, any complaints against the Government ?—I have something against the Government and against the white people.

Is it not true that just recently you told a Government official that you had no complaint whatever against the Government and against the white people ; and will you say now what your real complaint is ?—I agree with what the committee put before the Minister, and want to mention one or two things. I am pleased to see Toelupe present. Will the Department get the file of my case against Toelupe ? He put up a house on my land and cut down my trees without my consent. The case is now before the Administrator ; I have not yet received his decision. Is it right, under British law, to put up a house on land without the permission of the owner ?

*Hon. Minister* : The law will defend you if you have any legal complaint.

*Colonel Hutchen* : Is that your only complaint ?—If you want any more I will give more.

*Colonel Hutchen* : Go ahead.

*Ainu'u* : The Government took a piece of my land to widen the road without my consent. I made a complaint in August last and have not received an answer yet.

*Hon. Minister* : That is nothing to do with the principles of government ; that is a private thing. Put the matter before the Government in accordance with the law.

*Ainu'u* read the following extract from the *Samoa Guardian* :—

"(1) There is no objection to the functions of the Council of Faipules as constituted under the Samoan Amendment Act, 1923. A large number of people, however, are dissatisfied with the executive authority granted to members of the Faipule in the districts. It is desired to return to the original practice of the people to nominate and appoint their own representatives for a fixed period of years.

"(2) It is a desire to place no restrictions on customs concerning 'fine mats,' because these customs assist to preserve the dignity and honour of the country.

"(3) Nothing has been said or done by the committee to justify these remarks of His Excellency the Administrator. The committee has petitioned that laws imposing punishment upon offenders without trial before the constituted courts should be repealed.