



Kamasese with the Mau.

dependence movement.

Events moved slowly however and it wasn't until the later years of the five year rule of General George Richardson that matters became really tense. He ran Samoa like an army camp, and even insisted that Samoans salute white officials. Worse he adopted the practice of removing matai tiles and banishing people from their villages when he found people who acted against his policies. He had an advisory group, the Fono a Faipule, turned into an instrument of oppression but refused to allow democratic elections to the group.

By 1926 matters were brewing up. Nelson went to Wellington and saw the Prime Minister, Gordon Coates, the Minister of External Affairs William Nosworthy and Sir Maui, demanding changes in Samoa.

Nosworthy agreed to go to Samoa and Nelson returned to set up a citizens committee to prepare submissions for him. Richardson saw it as plotting and demanded that it stop, while successfully delaying Nosworthy's visit.

Two public meetings were held in March 1927, the Samoans who had

taken part in the citizens committee formed what they called "The Samoa League". It came instead to be known as the Mau, mau being the Samoan word for a group of people with a particular opinion. It was a pacifist movement with very few clear aims and a collective leadership who were not quite sure what they wanted. Richardson was sure of what they wanted; revolutionary overthrow of constitutional government. In fact the Mau at one point would probably have been content with a little bit more Samoan involvement in local government under New Zealand rule.

Richardson responded by banishing many of the Mau's leaders, including two to a small off-shore island, but the Mau grew in strength until by the end of 1927 some 90 per cent of all Samoans supported it.

Nelson was clearly sympathetic to the movement, but was not all that active in it. But Richardson blamed him and some other whites, believing Samoans to be incapable of protest organisation on their own. So he had Nelson, long term white resident Edwin Gurr and trader Alfred Smyth banished

from Samoa, the first two for five years and Smyth for two.

In February 1928 the Mau launched a boycott of shops in Apia and to back it up a group of Mau police went into town to picket the shops. Although no violence was offered, Richardson panicked and called the Royal Navy and Marines in. HMS Dunedin and Diomedé arrived from New Zealand and 400 Mau were rounded up and imprisoned. Samoa did not have the prison space, so a special compound was built on a peninsula to house the Mau. So sloppy was the work that the mau came and went from the camp simply by walking around the wire in the shallow lagoon. In the end Richardson had to admit defeat and let the Mau men go. During the time in the camp a change had come over the Mau with the appointment of Tupua Tamasese Lealofi III as leader. A holder of a princely title, Richardson had stripped him of his title and banished him when he refused to obey an order to remove a hedge outside his house.

Richardson left Samoa and was replaced by Stephen Allen who arrived in May 1928 with the newly formed