

Hon. Sir JAMES ALLEN: The matters about which you have not received direct answers will be further considered. Regarding the name "Fautua," I was not aware it was given by the Germans. I think you should discuss the matter with yourselves and the Administrator, and suggest some other title.

APIA, 7TH MARCH, 1920.

INSPECTION OF PLANTATIONS.

NOTES *re* CONDITIONS OF CHINESE AND OTHER INDENTURED LABOURERS.

*Wetzel's Plantation.*

It was explained to the party by Mr. Conrad (manager of the plantation) and by Mr. Coboerft that the Samoan women open the cocoa-pods, doing the work on task. Their wages are 3s. per day, and they may finish the task in three, four, five, or six hours.

After seeing the Chinese labourers' quarters and being shown a room occupied by a man and a woman—

Mr. HOLLAND asked Mr. Conrad: Do a man and woman live in there all the time?—A Chinaman and a Native woman.

Supposing the Chinaman marries in that form and the time comes when he wants to take the woman back to China, can he do it?—No. The children are illegitimate according to German law: the woman is not properly married.

What proportion of the Chinamen are married in that way?—A little less than two hundred.

And there are one thousand in Samoa?—Eight hundred.

Colonel TATE (Administrator): There were six hundred according to the last figures given to me—six hundred on the plantations.

Mr. HOLLAND: I should like to know what the rules are governing the lives of the Chinese here. Are they free to come and go as they like, or have you rules?

Colonel TATE (to Mr. Conrad): If the Chinaman leaves the plantation must he have a leave-pass?—Yes; and if he goes without it I complain to the Chinese Commissioner. If they could do what they liked, to-morrow I should have twenty out of the forty that I now have here, and the next day none.

Mr. HOLLAND: If he goes away without the leave-pass, what happens?—If he comes back the same day I do not say anything; but if he stays longer I have to report to the Chinese Commissioner.

And you send the police?—The Commissioner does that.

What form of punishment have you got?—If he stays away we take 2s. out of his wages.

What becomes of that 2s.?—The plantation does not pay it. He is not paid for his day's work.

Have you any form of lock-up, or watch-house, or anything like that on the plantation?—It is not the law. We cannot do that. We can only stop 2s. off his pay.

Mr. T. W. RHODES: I should like a little more information about the proportion of Chinese with women here.

Hon. Sir JAMES ALLEN: When we took over there were three thousand Chinese here. More than two thousand have gone back, and probably the married men have been left.

Mr. CONRAD: The married men stayed.

Hon. Sir JAMES ALLEN: How many of these men are living with women?—There are ten women and forty Chinese.

Mr. WRIGHT: In addition to the Chinaman having his pay stopped when he is absent, he is also fined 2s.?

The CHINESE CONSUL explained: According to the contract, his wages are deducted for the day he has lost, and then, by the Labour Ordinance, he will be fined or imprisoned. The employer deducts the wages, and the Court fines or imprisons.

Mr. LUKE (to Mr. Conrad): Will these Samoan women that are living here go round and be used by other Chinamen, or do they stick to the one?—They stick to the one. They do not go about.

Mr. ANDERSON: How many Chinese labourers are living in these huts that we see?—About forty men.

What happens if the Chinese labourer, after being fined, says "I will not go back"?

Mr. J. KERSLAKE (Acting Chinese Commissioner): He is simply sent back. My position is practically that of arbitrator between the Chinese and the employer. In the first place he must ask permission to leave the plantation, and permission must not be withheld without very good reason. If the labourer had not good reason to leave, I would send out the police to find him, hear his reason, and send him back to the plantation.

Mr. ANDERSON: If he said "I will not go back to the plantation"?—I would tell him he had made a contract for two years and he would have to work there, and I would advise him to go back.

But all that failing and assuming he would not go back?—I would take him to Court, and he would explain his reason to the Judge.

What would happen then?—If a labourer said he would not go back he must have some very good reason. I would approach the employer and say that I thought he had better let him seek a new employer. Both parties being agreeable, he would be allowed to go elsewhere.

If the planter was not agreeable, I want to know what would happen finally. Do you send him back to his country, or do you let him go free?—No; he must go to some one. He will be given permission to find a new employer, and he will do so.