

Out of that number how many married according to Samoan custom?—I do not think there were many married in those days. They were young men—they did not know the language. When they stopped longer they got familiar: they became practically Natives.

Mr. POTTER: If they are here about three years they will not take up with a Samoan woman?—They might then. In six years they probably would.

Mr. HOLLAND: Did any of your men who were repatriated leave wives behind here?—I really could not give an answer to that question.

Sir R. H. RHODES: But none of them took their wives to China with them?—No; I do not think they had any intention. I do not think any of my men were repatriated. I had a very small bill for repatriating Chinamen.

Mr. LUKE: What becomes of the Samoan wife and children if the Chinaman marries a Samoan according to Samoan custom and he goes to China? Is she a charge on the community?—That goes according to Samoan rule. If a woman gives birth to a child and has no man to look after her she goes back to her relations. The communistic course is followed. Such a woman has to work, but there is no stigma on her or the child.

She is not looked down upon?—Not by any means.

Mr. HORN: Do they marry again?—Yes.

Mr. LUKE: Are your men working on the task system or on day work?—They are on day work now. I change. I give them task work and I give them day work. One week it is one way and one week it is the other, generally; but it depends wholly on the class of work.

What is the lowest number of hours they work?—They are supposed to work ten hours, but generally they are not ten hours in it. They are in their homes by the time the hour strikes, and sometimes they have half an hour's walk to the place where they work.

In how many hours as a minimum can they complete a task?—If I am very foolish in giving them a contract they might be finished at 9 o'clock.

Mr. BARTRAM: That seldom happens, I suppose?—It happens sometimes.

Mr. LUKE: Take the average?—A neighbour gives tasks a good deal, and his boys are generally done by 2 or 3 o'clock.

Mr. A. HAMILTON: You look like a man who works, Mr. Langen: do you find it impossible for the white man to work here?—As you see, I do some little work, but I do not by any means do the work these boys are doing. There is one of them who suffered from consumption last year; he was spitting blood. He swings an axe ten hours a day with pleasure. I could not do that. By the way, he is quite cured of his complaint. He gets down just as many trees as one of the big Samoans would. They swing the axe for ten minutes and then they are finished.

Mr. S. G. SMITH: What do the boys earn?—£3 a month, and 10s. for special food they may like to buy. Rice they get free—between 1½ lb. and 2 lb. a day.

Mr. BARTRAM: You are higher than most people?—I know I am a bit higher than my neighbours.

With wages at £3 a month, can you make your plantation a paying proposition? We have been told that with wages at £2 10s. it is impossible to make a plantation pay?—It is a question of the return. If I had the return of some places which are not well managed I would have been bankrupt long ago.

Can you make it pay on a £3-a-month basis?—I can make this place pay at present at £3 a month for wages, because the capital I invested here was invested with wages at 15s. a month. Furthermore, I can at present make both ends meet because the cocoa is in full bearing. If I get a set-back from canker I might be just on the verge of not paying my expenses, or I might even lose. The £3 per month will not allow of any hard luck such as a drop in the price of cocoa. It just gives me a breathing-time now when my place is in good order. I dare say this place is really in the best state at present. In two years' time it will not be so good.

For development-work you would have to get the lower class of labour?—Decidedly.

Mr. WRIGHT: What is cocoa per ton now?—In Apia it is £130 a ton, delivered to the merchant.

What was it in pre-war times?—About £50 or £60 a ton.

It must mean a much bigger profit to the planter now than when it was £50 a ton?—I doubt it. Just compare the price of rice. Before the war you paid about £1 5s. a bag. Now it is £6 10s. and £7, and they are speaking of £8. That is the 200 lb. bag.

Is not that the only item that has gone up?—No. Take anything you have to buy: take horse-feed; take anything you like.

Mr. T. W. RHODES: They have not gone up in the same proportion?—But rice is the main item. I provide about ¾ ton of rice every month here, and if it rises to five times the price that means something to us.

Mr. HOLLAND: With regard to these labourers, when they have finished their day's work are they free to go where they want?—Absolutely.

Off the plantation? Absolutely. When they have finished their task work they can go. When the hour strikes they can go. And they are the law about the watch, too. It gives them about three hours in the afternoon for themselves.

Mr. WITTY: Are the black boys or the Chinamen the better workers?—On a coconut-plantation I would take a black boy, but on this place a Chinaman.

Mr. SIDEX: Have you had any experience with half-castes?—As overseers, yes; but I do not think them suitable as overseers over Chinamen.

How about half-caste Chinamen?—They are very few. I think they are highly intelligent. The few we have are very active people. One of the drivers to-day is a half-caste Chinaman. I remember his father very well.