

*Report of Meeting held at Vaimoso, 7th March, 1930, at 8.30 a.m.*

Present: His Excellency the Administrator; Hon. J. G. Cobbe; The Commodore Commanding New Zealand Station; The Secretary of Native Affairs; Commander Jeffreys, R.N.; Malietoa Tanu, Fautua; Mata'afa, Fautua; Faumuina; Tuimalealiifano; the brother of the late Tamasese; and a considerable number of other Mau representatives.

*Faumuina*: We thank Your Excellency for granting our request when Tuimalealiifano came as the representative of the Samoans to request if you could come here again this morning to meet us. These are the matters which we wish to put before Your Excellency and the Minister of Defence:

[Lengthy letter read by the brother of the late Tamasese, and copies handed to His Excellency and the Hon. Minister with translations in English; copy attached.]

*His Excellency the Administrator*: Well, I have read this letter with considerable interest. There are some of the matters that it refers to that I can answer at once. There are other matters which may require a certain amount of consideration. What I propose to do is to make a few remarks with regard to this letter first, and then if you wish to discuss these matters in detail I will make an arrangement by which it can be done at some later date.

Now, in regard to these first matters mentioned in your letter, the question of these petitions and the answers that have been received to them: as you are well aware, answers have been received to these petitions, and I myself handed one of the answers to the then representatives of the Mau, the answer to the petition to the League of Nations. But in making all these petitions and in expecting any result from these petitions you are making one great mistake, and that is that you do not use the means which are at hand to discuss any matters that you wish for the welfare of the country. The Administrator is the proper person to discuss these matters with. The Administrator is appointed to represent the New Zealand Government in Samoa and govern these islands on behalf of Samoa. The New Zealand Government represents the British Empire, and the British Empire is a member of the League of Nations which exercises the mandate over Samoa. Consequently, the Administrator is the proper person with whom to discuss these matters, and you are making a mistake in all these matters in sending forward these petitions and approaching all sorts of persons who are unable or unwilling to give these matters attention, instead of discussing them with the Administrator, who is willing and able to discuss them on the spot. It is your failure to realize this opportunity, to realize that the Administrator is here not only to help you, to assist you in every way he can, but also to represent the British Empire in your midst, and to represent more particularly His Majesty the King. It is your failure to realize this, to realize that here on the spot is the means by which you can bring all your troubles forward and discuss all your difficulties. It is that failure which has been the cause of a great deal of the trouble in these islands. During the last two years and more you have refrained from bringing any matters before the Administrator and have preferred to go to all sorts of other outside people, and the result has been complete failure, and it will be always complete failure until you realize that here on the spot in Samoa is the proper place to discuss and settle all your troubles.

Now, with regard to the question of fonos, which you mention here in the next paragraphs of your letter, I am quite prepared and I have always been prepared to hold fonos to discuss any matters of importance to the country, either those which I might bring before the fonos myself or those which you might put before me. But it is no use discussing general matters unless we have fonos representative of the whole country, and that is the reason why I suspended the sittings of the Fono of Faipules for the time being, because at that time I considered it was useless for us to meet there, because we were not getting really representative opinion from the whole of the country; but I am prepared at any time to hold a fono which is representative of all sections of the community and I will, if you wish, call a general fono with representatives from the whole of Samoa to be held in a few weeks' time at as early a date as we can arrange—a representative to be chosen from each district of all the matais in that district. At such a fono we can discuss any business affecting the country, and it will be representative of all sections and opinions of the community. I will do that if you wish. Such a fono would be attended by representatives from all the districts, and I myself would appoint a few of the more important chiefs who may be regarded as belonging more to the whole of Samoa than to any particular district such, for instance, as the two Fautuas, Tuimalealiifano, Tamasese, Faumuina, and probably one or two others.

Now, with regard to further matters in your letter, there are several questions relating to different occurrences in Samoa affecting generally the administration of justice, and I should like to say first what I have said here before, that the administration of justice in Samoa will be carried out with the utmost impartiality irrespective of who may be the offender, whether he be white man or Samoan, or whether he be chief or taulealea. With the administration of justice I will not interfere, nor will any Administrator who is ever appointed to govern these islands. That is a matter for the Chief Judge and the Courts, and I will not interfere either to grant any safe conduct or protection to those who have broken the law or to shield them in any way from punishment, unless the Chief Judge wishes it. That is a matter for the Chief Judge and the Courts entirely. That is the whole principle on which British justice is founded—that it is administered by those who are called on to preside over the Courts, that it is quite independent of those who are appointed to carry on the government of the country.

And with regard to the question of the women and children which occurs in paragraph 12 of your letter, did you think of the comfort of your women and children when you abandoned them in the villages, while you wandered through the bush? Is it your fault or the Government's fault that they were neglected and left to themselves when I issued a Proclamation calling upon all the Samoans to return to their own villages?