

1930.

## NEW ZEALAND.

CORONER'S FINDING IN THE INQUEST RESPECTING  
THE FATALITIES IN WESTERN SAMOA

(28TH DECEMBER, 1929).

THE FINDINGS, AND REASONS THEREFOR, IN THE INQUESTS INTO DEATHS OF CONSTABLE WILLIAM ABRAHAM; HIGH CHIEF TAMASESE; TAPU; FAUMUINA OF SAFOTU, SAVAI'I; AINOA; VELE; MIGAO; TU'IA; LEOTA.

*Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.*

ON the 2nd day of January, 1930, I opened an inquest touching the deaths of Constable William Abraham and two Natives named Migao and Leota, whose bodies lay at the Apia Hospital on the 28th December, 1929. It was alleged that the three deceased died from injuries received during an affray in Apia between the Samoan Police Force and a body of Samoans on the morning of that day. It came to my knowledge that other Samoans met their deaths in the same occurrence, and accordingly I intimated that I would include in my inquiry the cause of the deaths of any other persons who died as the result of injuries then received.

Evidence having been given of the deaths of High Chief Tamasese, Tapu, Ainoa, Faumuina of Savai'i, Vele, and Tu'ia, I accordingly extended the inquiry thereto; although there was no direct evidence that Ainoa, Faumuina of Savai'i, and Vele were injured in the affray, there is sufficient evidence for me to draw the inference that they, as well as the others, received injuries at that time and that they died as a result of those injuries.

It became necessary, in my opinion, to inquire into all the circumstances surrounding the occurrence. Thirty-five witnesses gave evidence at the hearing, of whom thirteen were called by the Crown and twenty-two by Mr. Slipper, who appeared for the relatives of the deceased Samoans; although Mr. Slipper stated that he was unable to call certain other witnesses he agreed that the evidence adduced was comprehensive of the subject-matter under review; with that I concur.

On the morning of the 28th December the arrival from Pago Pago of two gentlemen, Messrs. Smyth and Hall Skelton, was expected, and to mark the event a Samoan demonstration of welcome was arranged by the members of an organization called the Mau: the demonstration was to be in the form of a procession from the Tivoli landing-wharf to the village of Vaimoso, and a series of entertainment after the visitors and the procession had reached that village.

In the ordinary course of events people land in Samoa from overseas at the Customs Wharf, but in this instance Mr. Kruse, who was to be Mr. Hall Skelton's host in Apia, applied to and obtained from the Inspector of Police on the 27th December permission for both the visitors to land at the Tivoli Wharf.

For some time past the members of the Mau organization have been opposed to the Government of Samoa. From the evidence adduced at this inquiry I gather that the members of the organization are required by its leaders to forbear from paying taxes prescribed by law and to resist arrest in respect of any proceedings which might be taken in consequence of such forbearance. Not only is the individual concerned to resist arrest, but other members are required to assist him in the resistance.