

Considering the large amount of money earned by natives, their increasing industry, and steady advance in the habits of civilization, and that there is not a native in Fiji who is not a consumer of imported merchandise, while native salaries and allowances paid on account of native officers of the Government amount alone to over £11,000—is it difficult to believe that they individually consume at least 41s. *per caput* of the imports of the Colony. If such a belief is warranted, then I fear the allegation that the European population of the Colony are the principal contributors to the revenue, must be dismissed as founded on error.* Upon this important and most interesting subject I must record my opinion—an opinion, I may add, not lightly arrived at—that the native, and not the European, inhabitants of this Colony are the principal contributors to the revenue, and that, in the matter of Indian immigration, mail contracts, and a not inconsiderable part of the establishment of government, they contribute to an expenditure in which they have either no interest, or at best only a remote one. But it is also to be remembered, in the consideration of this subject, that, as regards direct taxation, the Europeans during the year 1882 paid, under the heading of “General licenses,” the sum of £3,567, which, as before said, was ultimately borne by the persons dealing with the licensees, and that the natives paid, under the heading of “Native taxes,” £18,346, the burden of which it was not possible to transfer to third persons.

As, apart from the two heads of taxation last noticed, it must be clear that revenue proper is derived indirectly from imports, and is, in fact, dependent in amount upon the general trade of the Colony, it may be well to see what that trade is *per caput*, as compared with other countries, *if the native population is excluded from consideration.*

The value of the total imports of 1882 (excluding machinery), amounted to £285,479, and of exports, £190,517; therefore, the total trade of the Colony per head of European population, amounted to £190 7s.

The magnitude of the success thus attainable under the Government of a Crown Colony, in the brief space of eight years from the date of its foundation, may (presuming the petitioners' views are correct) be gathered from the following statement:—

Countries.	Population at last Enumeration.	Trade per Head of Population.		
		£	s.	d.
Austria and Hungary	35,904,435	2	14	3
France	36,102,921	8	17	9
Russia in Europe	63,658,934	1	15	9
Great Britain	31,817,108	21	8	10
United States	38,588,371	5	19	8
Canada	3,602,321	12	19	2
New South Wales	693,743	40	18	1 $\frac{1}{4}$
Fiji	2,500	190	7	0

The 12th paragraph of the petition is, as regards the latter portion of it, also singularly wanting in accuracy. The earlier part complains that “all Government appointments are made by the Crown alone;” but, as all Governments have the right alone of making such appointments, this statement should be regarded perhaps less as a cause of grievance than the expression of a desire, on the part of the petitioners, to take a new departure in one of the fundamental rules associated with the administration of government. It is said that “a reference to the appointments made for some years past will show that only an exceedingly small proportion of the offices created have been filled by residents in the Colony, and that in the great majority of instances preference has been given to cadets from England or Scotland, or persons from India.”

To show the utter incorrectness of this statement, a list is attached to this minute, giving the names and stations of all the officers of Government, other than the Chief Justice and members of Executive Council. But it may be said here that the “cadets from England and Scotland” referred to do not exceed five in number, and that the “persons from India” are some half a dozen officers, engaged specially as interpreters of the English and Hindostani languages, and whose presence here is owing entirely to the introduction of East Indian coolie labourers for service on plantations. The total number of officers on the establishment (not being native Fijians) is 97. Of this number there came from England six medical officers, three magistrates, three clerks, and four so-called cadets. These officers, with seven interpreters from India, amount in all to 23 persons; the remaining 74 are colonists, many of them old ones, and many of them still attached to the offices they held under the Fiji Government prior to annexation. In view of these facts, the first part of the complaint contained in this paragraph appears frivolous, and the latter part to be culpably misleading.

The 13th paragraph contains something closely approaching wilful misrepresentation. It is true that the municipal affairs of the town of Suva are temporarily being conducted by a Government officer, under the provisions of an Ordinance attached, but it is a matter of notoriety that this state of things was necessitated by the fact that, on account of Government works in progress at Suva, and the bustle and confusion in which the residents themselves were at the outset of the building of the new town and the transfer to it of the seat of government, the place was not ripe for the creation of a Municipal Board. It has been equally a subject of notoriety, that the management of the town affairs by a public officer was of temporary duration, not to extend beyond the

* But should this view be not absolutely sustained, enough has been said to show that, even admitting the value of imports per head of European population is double that of New Zealand in 1882, there will still be left an amount to be accounted for, more than sufficient for the purposes of the opinion now put forward, that natives are the greatest consumers.