

*Mr. Boué* (Messrs. Hedemann, Evers, and Co.) asked for information *re* comparison of tariffs of New Zealand and Fiji.

*The Warden* : You must understand that at present New Zealand tariff is higher than New South Wales, but the Federated Commonwealth's tariff will be undoubtedly a protective one, on a higher scale, on account of other colonies being protectionist and being in the majority.

*A Voice* : What about the imports and exports to come from New Zealand ?

*The Warden* : I have no idea.

*A Voice* : The New Zealand tariff is 25 per cent. higher.

*The Warden* : You must bear in mind many goods that we are paying duty on now would, under federation with New Zealand, come in duty free, such as biscuits, meats, soap, being New Zealand products. Any way, whichever way we look at it, we cannot be worse off than we are now.

*Mr. J. Harman* : Mr. Chairman and gentlemen,—I have listened attentively to all the speakers this evening. I know nothing about federation. I have been in this country a matter of forty years and know Fiji and the Fijians well. The Fijians represent a few thousands. Now, I say, take away the present restrictions on the native's liberty. When the famous deed of annexation was read to the native chiefs at Nasova (I was not there then) they were told that they were British subjects. Then, if so, why were and why are separate regulations and laws made for them ? Why are they not treated as British subjects amenable to the same laws as their brothers, the white man ? Take a case ; for adultery they get three months, while fornication costs them four shillings to one pound. Is that liberty ? Is that British freedom ? Now we are told they are British subjects (I don't know if this is treasonable). But I assert these distinct regulations and distinctions proclaim loudly that they are not British subjects. No ! the flag that waves over you and me does not make them freemen. If a native stays away from his home he gets one month ; if he still stays away he gets three months. That is British rule. I cannot recall the Ordinance referred to by a previous speaker *re* Indian labour—section 8 or something. But this I say, we do not want the Indians here in Fiji, and to give them their freedom. Now, turn to another point—bribery. It is no secret ; any man present to-night has had experience of it. Suppose you want to employ native labour, you must first bribe the buli. He must be bribed before a single man can be got. The men may want to go, but cannot stir without the consent of their chief ; and to get that consent you must bribe him. Deny it, who can ? Not the men but the buli arranges the whole matter. The native system is rotten—I speak from an experience of forty years. I remember, in 1873, we had a meeting here in Levuka, as now, at which I saw double the number of gentlemen present. The cry was, Let us have annexation at any price ! And you have got it, and you know it. (Cheers.) Now, a new cry is raised, Let us have federation ! Yes, I say, let us have it ; let us have New Zealand or anything for a change. Melbourne would not have us ; quite right. Sydney followed suit. Now, Dick Seddon looks on us with favour. What is he going to do with the sugar industry ? I say, take the sugar away ; it has done nothing for the country. When the great company—the C.S.R. Co.—came to Fiji, we had quantities of small planters, men who held an industry, the backbone of Fiji. Where are they now ? Wiped out ! Wiped out by the C.S.R. Co. Take the company away, refuse them Indian labour ; and the colony as a whole will be the gainer. Now, as to that important question—products for export. Tapioca, tea, bananas ; several have been referred to as being capable of export to New Zealand. Gentlemen, we have exported, and with what result ? We tried, and we glutted the market. A few shipments supply New Zealand. She would not be able to take what we produce. But my experience since annexation leads me to say that we cannot be worse off. Let us federate with any constitutional colony that will have us.

*Dr. Hallan* : Mr. Chairman, the officials have been referred to by Mr. Berkeley as being opposed to advance. But I will ask you all to remember that medical men are the representatives of advance, and on that account alone I protest. I would ask for a little information. My mind is hazy on several points just discussed. I confess that I am still uncertain what is meant by federation. We want a better definition of the word. Suggestions have been made relative to the establishment of a Federal Council. This seems to me like the tail of the dog. (Laughter.) Again, a question stands out that is not fully dealt with, not the labour question here, which is a minor matter, but the native question in New Zealand. We had Natal referred to. Now, I have followed the native question in that colony closely, and I think, gentlemen, you can hardly quote Natal with enthusiasm. As to the public debt, why not keep your own debt ? I cannot see any obstacle to that course. It seems to me that if we are to agree, we must first start with a clear idea of what federation means, or else schisms will creep in.

*Mr. Cauley* : Mr. Chairman, Are natives to have the franchise ? (Cries of "No ! No !").

*The Warden* : We cannot settle that at present. Mr. Berkeley might give us his idea on this point.

*Mr. Berkeley* : I should say that the qualification for the franchise would be on a property basis, and if the native possesses such property, why not let him vote ? It is best, however, at this stage not to interfere with the question.

*Mr. Mackenzie* : In New Zealand there are a few Maori electorates.

*Mr. R. Headdey* (Bentley and Co.) : This is a serious question. Fiji is about as low as possible. Let us federate by all means. I myself am not a great believer in New Zealand, but a change would do us no harm. This is a Crown colony of a severe type. Are we to pay New Zealand's debt ? (Cries of "No ! No !"). Well it is a question that wants thinking out. But let us have anything—federation or annexation.

*The Warden* : The doctor asks, "What is federation ?" I take it that if New Zealand accept Fiji as a federal colony we will have to a great extent a voice in our own government—a parliament of residents of Fiji, conducting local affairs, also a parliament in New Zealand to discuss larger questions. At present we are annexed, and have no voice in our own affairs. There will be no trouble about the labour question. We have men in Fiji