

7. The right of trial by jury, which is the birthright of every Englishman, whether living in England or in a colony, and the only guarantee of freedom and upholding of personal rights, is curtailed in such a manner as to be practically denied to the colonists. In civil cases the Chief Justice, who is the sole Judge in the colony, sits without a jury. In such cases there is no appeal except to the Privy Council, and then only when the sum involved exceeds £500, which renders appeal practically prohibitive. In criminal cases a jury is allowed only when both the complainant and the accused are whites; in all other cases (and such constitute the vast majority) the Chief Justice sits with Assessors, who are not allowed to find the verdict, but who merely deliver an opinion, which the Chief Justice may, at his discretion, disregard.

8. Your memorialists therefore earnestly pray that you will assist the people of this colony to free themselves from the form of Government under which they are now living, and obtain for them a Government in consonance with their rights as English-born people, and one suitable to their wants and aspirations; and, with that end in view, that you will obtain the sanction of the Imperial Government for the purpose of securing self-government for Fiji with a view to the incorporation of Fiji with New Zealand as an integral portion of that colony.

9. The Colony of Fiji is even now self-supporting, and practically without debt. Freed from the withering effects of arbitrary and irresponsible personal Government, the potentialities of this colony are such as to place it in the first rank among the tropical possessions of the Crown.

10. Your memorialists confidently believe that the federation of New Zealand and Fiji would result to the mutual advantage of both colonies.

And your memorialists will ever pray, &c.

To the Premier and Ministers of Her Majesty's Government of the Colony of New Zealand.

T. G. Rumenschmidt, Warden
of Suva.

Humphry de Reley.

G. L. Griffiths.

W. T. Sturt.

H. Gardner Hunt.

Fred. A. Thomas.

George Fox.

Alport Barker, Hon. Sec.

Suva, Fiji, 14th September, 1900.

PETITION.

To the Hon. the Speaker and Members of the New Zealand House of Representatives in Parliament assembled.

THE humble petition of the undersigned respectfully sheweth,—

1. That your petitioners are the settlers and colonists of Fiji, and that their interests as such are indissolubly bound up in its political, commercial, and industrial advancement.

2. That the very large proportion of them have been attracted here from New Zealand and the neighbouring colonies of Australia, where they have enjoyed and exercised the civil and political privileges there secured to the subject.

3. That the population of Fiji is estimated to consist of two thousand five hundred Europeans, who own, approximately, one-tenth of the area of the islands, and represent upwards of £3,000,000 of invested capital, derived principally from New Zealand and Australia; and one hundred and fifteen thousand native-born Fijians, exclusive of labourers introduced from Polynesia and India.

4. That since the 10th of October, 1874, Fiji has been a British dependency, and has been administered as a Crown colony of a severe type.

5. That this form of administration nominally associates in the work of government the Governor, the Executive Council, and the Legislative Council.

6. That the Executive Council consists of the Governor and four official members.

7. That the Legislative Council is composed of six officials (including the Governor, as President, and the Executive Councillors) and six unofficials, not elected by the colonists, but nominated by the Governor.

8. That the Governor, who exercises both a deliberate and casting-vote, also directs how the official vote shall be recorded; and that, as he thus holds in his hand the controlling power, he absolutely dominates the deliberations, and the system is reduced to the bare lines of a simple despotism.

9. That this form of Government is opposed to the commercial, agricultural, and industrial progress of the colony, and that in these respects its continued maintenance in their midst is inimical to the interests, not only of Fiji, but also of New Zealand and the Australian Colonies.

10. That through the operation of this system your petitioners have been deprived of all constitutional rights and privileges, and have been reduced to the position of political nonentities.

11. That they are heavily taxed, while they remain unrepresented, and are thus unjustly excluded from all participation in the ordering of public affairs.

12. That, though the revenue amounts to £100,000 per annum, it is almost entirely absorbed in meeting the demands of a ruinously wasteful and cumbrous system of administration, unsuited to the wants and conditions of the colony; and that, while the contributors are denied any voice in its expenditure, the advantages they derive from the outlay are, comparatively, of but a trivial character.

13. That, in proof of the above, the estimated expenditure for the current year amounts to £96,738 18s. 11d., of which total the sum voted under the head of public works amounts to but £9,336 10s.