

1900.

NEW ZEALAND.

FEDERATION OF FIJI WITH NEW ZEALAND.

(PETITION FROM RESIDENTS OF FIJI, TOGETHER WITH APPENDIX.)

Laid on the Table of the House of Representatives by Leave.

THE respectful memorial of the undersigned sheweth,—

1. Your memorialists are a committee nominated by the inhabitants of Suva in public meeting assembled for the purpose of bringing about the incorporation of Fiji with New Zealand.

2. A petition having that object in view was presented on behalf of this colony to the Speaker and House of Representatives so long ago as the year 1885, but did not then meet with a favourable reply. A copy of that petition is hereto appended. A period of fifteen years has elapsed since the presentation of that petition to the Parliament of New Zealand, but the disabilities and the grievances therein set forth still remain unremoved and unredressed; and your memorialists once again, in the name of the people of Suva, appeal to New Zealand.

3. Since the date of the petition above referred to the numbers of the white population have grown by natural increase and otherwise, and at present exceeds four thousand persons, according to the latest Government blue-book. During the same period the general population has been increased by the importation of immigrants from British India, as labourers on the great sugar-plantations which are established in this colony. The number of such immigrants now approximates fifteen thousand.

4. With deep regret your memorialists find themselves obliged to state that during the period referred to there had been a grave decrease in the native Fijian population. Numbering in the year 1885 approximately a hundred and fifteen thousand, the native Fijian race has now dwindled to ninety-eight thousand, or thereabouts, a decrease of seventeen thousand in fifteen years.

5. Various causes are from time to time put forward in attempting to explain away responsibility for the condition of the native race. Your memorialists, however, assert, without hesitation, that the Government of Fiji is unable to rid itself of responsibility for the present condition of the Fijians. The decrease in population is directly attributable to the specially oppressive system of government applied to them, and to the excessive burden of taxation to which, under that system, they are subjected.

The accompanying memorandum by the Rev. W. Slade, a Wesleyan missionary among the Fijians of many years' experience, supports the views expressed in this regard by your memorialists, and is a very powerful indictment of the grinding communal system under which the native Fijians are against their will compelled to live.

Your memorialists assert that the charges and allegations made by the Rev. W. Slade are in no way exaggerated, and your memorialists would welcome the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into such charges and allegations, and generally into the causes for the present condition of the native race.

6. Not only are the native inhabitants governed under a system of personal government which retards the moral and injures the physical development of the race, but the white inhabitants of the colony, who are for the most part New-Zealanders and Australians and their descendants, are also subjected to personal government, are entirely deprived of all voice in the making of the laws under which they have to live, and are altogether unrepresented in the Legislature which levies the taxes which they have to pay. In the administration of public affairs the interests of the white inhabitants of the colony are disregarded, and their wishes, though respectfully and constitutionally expressed, meet with curt and uncourteous refusal.

Recently the Governor has, in face of the unanimous opposition of the colonists, stopped the small subsidy of £1,500 previously to his arrival paid to the Canadian-Australian Royal Mail line of steamers, with the result that the colony has lost the advantage of that means of communication between Australia and Europe by way of Canada. Again, notwithstanding the earnest protests of the inhabitants of Suva, the Governor persists in retaining within the precincts of the town, and in close proximity to the dwellinghouses of certain of the citizens, a bubonic-plague station and a leper settlement. In the absence of representation in the Legislature the people of the colony are unable to place any check upon such arbitrary acts of the Executive or upon such maladministration of public affairs.

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.

14. That with the present revenues of the colony, and in view of the increase which would follow were its trade and industries fostered and developed by a wise and suitable form of government, your petitioners strongly believe a considerable surplus would remain to be employed in public works, and in opening up and bringing under the immediate notice of the outside world the vast natural resources of this group of islands.

15. That the Judicial Department is presided over by a single Judge, from whose decision in civil matters there is no appeal, except, in certain cases, to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council; while, at the same time, the right of trial by jury in all such cases is practically prohibited.

16. That in criminal cases the jury right is only allowed when Europeans alone are principals, but where men of native race are involved, either as accusers or accused, the Judge sits with Assessors, who may not deliver a verdict, but may merely give an opinion, which opinion the Judge may entirely ignore or give effect to at his pleasure.

17. That while the Europeans are subjected to these disabilities and humiliations, the native-born Fijians are controlled by a special form of government which has most prejudicially affected the prosperity, progress, and general development of the race.

18. That the imposition upon the natives of a tax, to be paid in produce, of £18,000 annual value, most wastefully absorbs their working-power, and binds a heavy burden upon their shoulders; while the extent to which they are subjected to chiefly levies for service and contributions, the restrictions placed upon their personal liberty, and the interference with their right freely to hire their labour in the best market to the highest bidder, and to enjoy in security the fruit thereof, is tending to enslave and demoralise them.

19. That the general effect of the causes above set forth is a state of agricultural stagnation and commercial depression which is now very seriously affecting the prosperity of the colony.

20. That to improve the position of themselves and native-born Fijian fellow-subjects, and to obtain full relief from the surrounding difficulties, your petitioners have long cherished a strong and earnest desire for the incorporation of Fiji with the Colony of New Zealand, a result that they feel persuaded would be attended with solid and substantial advantages in which both colonies would share.

21. That the self-supporting position of Fiji is clearly evident from the facts that while its population and revenue are as above stated, according to last official returns, which show a decrease on those for the former year, its imports still amount to £434,522; exports, £345,343; total foreign trade, £779,866 annually; while its public debt amounts only to £254,025 7s. 11d., of which £150,000 is bearing interest at 4½ per cent., and the remainder is an Imperial grant-in-aid without interest.

22. That advantage to New Zealand would accrue through the extension of her commerce, the opening up of a wider because a more exclusive market for her products and manufactures, and through the strengthening of her natural position as the colony entitled to exercise the dominant influence in the Southern Seas.

23. That, according to recent calculation, the business done by New Zealand with Fiji does not amount to more than £67,500 annually, whereas from her geographical position and closer contiguity the very great proportion of it would thus be secured to her.

24. That in desiring this connection your petitioners are deeply sensible of the benefits it will confer not only upon themselves, but also upon the Fijians, whom they are convinced would warmly join in this request if it were possible to consult them. Nevertheless, the appeal is made upon the joint behalf, and

Your petitioners therefore now most humbly pray :—

1. That your honourable House will take their case into its thoughtful and favourable consideration.
2. That it will be pleased to support and indorse the action here taken, and by its powerful representations to the Imperial Government endeavour to bring about the incorporation of Fiji with New Zealand.
3. That in the event of the hoped-for successful issue, it will be graciously pleased to grant Fiji relief from its present disadvantageous position by conferring upon it a form of government more suited to the wants and conditions of its people.

And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray, &c.

W. Ledingham, Merchant.

T. H. Prichard, Journalist.

W. I. Thomas, Barrister and Solicitor.

C. W. Drury, Commission Agent.

F. W. Witham, Commission Agent.

D. B. Millar, Storekeeper.

Alfred W. B. Duffy, Photographer.

A. J. L. Coates, Accountant.

F. H. Hedemann, Merchant.

C. Machens, Merchant.

C. F. Small, Contractor.

Houng Lee, Storekeeper.

J. B. Swann, Chemist.

Alfred Stevens, Storekeeper.

John Collins, Grocer.

Patrick S. Ryan, Hotelkeeper.

H. Douglas, Master Mariner.

P. Hoerder, Merchant.

Adolph Ruschpler, Storeman.

John Walker.

George Krafft, Storekeeper.

W. G. Whiteside, Storekeeper.

O. Olive, Storekeeper.

J. P. Gore Martin, Accountant and Landowner.

A. Lindsay Douglas, Accountant.

W. W. Forwood and Co., Commission Agents.

D. Paul, Auctioneer and Commission Agent.

Hugh Munro, Hotelkeeper.

E. J. Faulkner, Hairdresser and Tobacconist.

Wm. West, Ironmonger.

Syd. O. Edwards, Ironmonger.

John St. Julian, Solicitor.

- John Robinson, Storekeeper.
 Wm. Ewins, Storekeeper.
 Wm. J. Ewins, Commission Agent.
 Stephen J. Cusack, Builder.
 John Acraman, Storeman.
 E. Saunders, Sailmaker.
 Geo. Fraser, Builder.
 W. H. Bruce, Shipbuilder.
 William Knight, Sailmaker.
 John Gallagher, Squatter.
 J. J. Gough, Overseer.
 W. H. Gallagher, Compositor.
 Charles Hennings, Merchant.
 William Fillingham Parr, Planter.
 John Connelly, Hotelkeeper.
 George Hill, Carpenter.
 James Kemp, Overseer.
 Miss Clarke, Governess.
 Wm. Paterson, Clerk.
 John Ferrant, Compositor.
 Geo. Johnson, Planter.
 R. C. Gogs, Settler.
 G. Godigh, Contractor and Builder.
 G. E. Quilter, Engineer.
 Thomas Bates, Overseer.
 J. Johnston, Clerk.
 R. Foreman, Sailmaker.
 H. R. Kirkwood, Clerk.
 John Scoles, Shipwright.
 Robert Craig, Shipwright.
 Henry Cave, Merchant.
 J. Mackley, Blacksmith.
 W. Wheeler, Tinsmith.
 B. Morris, Baker.
 L. Morris.
 F. Pucile, Master Mariner.
 H. Whiteside, Storekeeper.
 David Robbie, Hotelkeeper.
 R. Moss, Storekeeper.
 H. E. Ambler, Clerk.
 J. M. Bourne, Master Mariner.
 Saul Levy, Storekeeper.
 G. Watkins, Tailor.
 Ledingham and Maxwell, Shipwrights.
 W. J. Thomson, Clerk.
 D. J. Solomon, Clerk.
 R. C. Cox, Jack-of-all-Trades.
 F. H. Dufty, Jeweller, &c.
 J. B. Marriot, Storeman.
 F. L. Langdale, Planter.
 C. Evans, Planter.
 W. E. Giles, Freighter.
 G. L. Griffiths, Publisher.
 F. W. Levitt, Bookbinder.
 B. F. Ewins, Printer.
 Robt. Milne.
 A. A. Coubrough, Planter and Timber Merchant.
 Harry Gordon, Civil Engineer and Surveyor.
 H. A. Treacy, Planter.
- J. H. Peterson, Planter.
 A. Rankine Wilson, Planter.
 J. C. Wall, Planter.
 D. McCormack, Planter.
 George Wright, Planter.
 G. C. H. Smith, Planter.
 H. Harrington, Planter.
 G. Petersen, Planter.
 W. T. Peckham, Planter.
 John W. Taylor, Planter.
 S. Strang, Planter.
 W. Reddoes, Planter.
 G. Keene.
 Thos. Pickeriyy.
 A. J. Stephens, Planter.
 W. Fisher, Planter and Storekeeper.
 George Gerrish, Storekeeper.
 Ed. Magness, Storekeeper.
 C. J. Lindberg, Storekeeper.
 M. McGrae, Storekeeper.
 J. Pfluger, Storekeeper.
 John Robertson, Storeman.
 Wm. F. Hunter, Planter.
 Robt. Muir, Planter.
 Robert F. Harris, Planter.
 Blatchford and Scott, Planters.
 H. L. Kennedy, Planter.
 G. W. Muir, Planter.
 John Leveny, Planter.
 David Hannoh, Trader.
 N. Chalmers, Manager, Penang Estate.
 D. A. Logan, Engineer, Penang Sugar-mill.
 Tho. Brodersen, Bricklayer, Penang Sugar-mill.
 Joseph Fulton, Overseer.
 Arthur Bayley, Bricklayer.
 James Logan, Overseer.
 Thomas Hill, Overseer.
 Thomas S. Potts, Overseer.
 G. H. W. Markham, Overseer.
 James Dods, Planter.
 John S. Dods, Planter.
 A. A. Brodziak, Storekeeper.
 Wilfred Stephens, Planter and Trader.
 E. Caddigan, Mariner and Planter.
 William A. Bathes, Trader.
 John K. Walker, Planter.
 F. Arthur Jackson, Landowner.
 Donald R. Smith, Planter.
 Wilson Brothers, Planters.
 W. Lydiard, Planter.
 H. G. Cook, Planter.
 J. W. Murray, Planter.
 George E. J. Richards, Trader.
 A. Harman, Planter.
 D. Montgomery, Printer.
 T. Patterson, Blacksmith.
 S. J. Owen, Carpenter.
 R. W. Robertson, Tinsmith.

Levuka, 6th May, 1885.

EXTRACT FROM THE FIJI "TIMES" OF 1ST SEPTEMBER, 1900.

FEDERATION AND THE NATIVES.

[By Rev. W. SLADE.]

THE question has often been asked me of late, What attitude does the Wesleyan Mission assume towards Federation? My answer has been: As a mission, no attitude at all. The Wesleyan Mission, as a mission, is neutral in politics. But while the mission wisely, as I think, maintains an attitude of neutrality, and is not likely in its corporate capacity to express any opinion on

Federation, this does not prevent individual members of the mission staff from holding and expressing opinion either for or against it. In setting forth, therefore, my own views on Federation as it may affect the native population of Fiji, I wish it to be understood that I write only on my own behalf, and am not committing the mission to which I belong to any particular set of opinions, much less to any course of action.

The standpoint from which I wish to discuss the question is that of a person whose only reason for being in Fiji at all is the welfare of the natives, and who views Federation not as it may affect the commercial interests of the European population, but as it bears on the condition and prospects of the Fijians themselves.

What would be the effect of Federation on them? To answer this question it is necessary to ask another: Has the present Crown Colony Government proved so successful in its relation to the natives that it ought to be perpetuated? Let us review the situation.

For several reasons Fiji is an interesting country to the student of political economy. Nowhere else is afforded the opportunity of watching an experiment in governing such as we witness here; and there is nothing so valuable as practical experiments in estimating the work of theories. For that reason I have watched carefully the progress of government in this country. I have never been one of those whose chief recreation lies in abuse of the Government, and who are by long habit unable to distinguish between good and bad. It has been my aim to judge calmly and dispassionately, and to view affairs from the point of those who are responsible for the administration of the Government. The following are the results of my observations:—

1. The Fiji Government has committed itself to the maintenance of the communal system. When the cession of the group took place a sort of communal system was found in existence. It would, perhaps, be more correct to say that it was a despotism in which the chiefs were the tyrants. They held sole possession of the lives and property of the population, while the mass of the people were communal in complete subservience to the chiefs. It seemed easy for the new Government to extend and crystallize this system. It was much easier than to face the problem of emancipating the people from its thralldom, and so grew up a code of Ordinances whose effect has been to give the chance communism of the old Fiji all the force of law in the new. I assume for the sake of brevity that my readers are sufficiently informed concerning the present communal system to obviate the necessity of my entering into greater detail. To this system the Fiji Government is committed, and to all appearance irrevocably committed. I venture to say that the perpetuation of the communal system has been a great mistake.

Those who know natives well, know that what they most lack, and what, if they are ever to be true men, they must somehow acquire, are the qualities of mind and soul that are expressed in our word "character." But character is just what the natives have not. We who work for and among them know too painfully how deficient in all many qualities they are. Courage, honour, firmness, perseverance, pure ambition, truthfulness, unselfishness—these and kindred qualities are all too rare. Let me say here that the natives are not generally hypocrites as many thoughtlessly say; they mean well, but being deficient in character they are weak and the victims of circumstances. They do mentally and morally what many others, not only natives, do temporarily—live from hand to mouth; and so are mere opportunists, whose conduct under the ordinary circumstances of life may never be foretold.

But environment has everything to do with growth of character. Place any number of men in situations requiring certain qualities of mind, and the axiom will be verified that occasions produce the men to deal with them; and vital objection to socialism is that it obliterates individuality, and communism is only another name for socialism. Herd men together like sheep, take away from them all incentive and ambition, impose on them a legal code that stops all outlet for individual effort, stifle all expressions of individual opinion, and the result most assuredly will be the annihilation of all character and the production of a placid race of mental and moral invertebrates.

This has been the result of the communal system developed and perpetuated by the Fiji Government. The policy of the Wesleyan Mission in its synods and church courts has been to promote individualism among the natives. Freedom of discussion, room for the exercise of judgment, and a share in the legislation and administration of ecclesiastical affairs—these have always been conceded. The policy of the Government has been, and is now more than ever, the direct opposite to this. The Councils are a mere matter of form, and are dominated by officials; and the will of the people gives place always to the personal will of the Governor. Freedom of discussion and the expression of private opinion are effectively checked by such laws as that of *Vakaturibu ca.*, an Ordinance wide enough to catch even the most wary. In such environment a nation of men cannot be formed. It is not being formed in Fiji.

2. The communal system is bound up with the maintenance of the poll-tax. I do the Government no wrong when I say the natives are governed principally in the interests of that tax. When I read the report of the Commission on the decrease of the native population, I was struck with the use of the argument that it was desirable to preserve the native race because its extinction meant a serious loss of revenue to the Government. We are witnessing just now a new departure in the operations of the Provincial Inspectors. I have good reason for saying that the work of those Inspectors is regulated to suit the exigencies of the poll-tax. If an Inspector whose mind rises a bit above fitting up ditches and erecting bamboo fences suggests any radical measure for the improvement of the natives, he is met by the objection that his proposal might interfere with the collection of the poll-tax. And what do we see, therefore? That the people are being brought in off the land and huddled together in villages of area so limited that conversation in one house may

be overheard in the next, and the inhabitants are not able to keep a domestic animal—not even a militant rooster and his attendant hens. Villages are removed from fertile valleys and placed on the roadsides; a village at all roomy is contracted, and all to make the people more easily get-at-able in the interests chiefly of the poll-tax. For the same reason the natives are bound to their villages most of the year, and it has come to pass that, though we have in Fiji upwards of thirty-five thousand able-bodied men, traders and planters needing a few weeks or days of casual labour frequently cannot obtain a man. In travelling through the interior of Viti Levu I have been painfully impressed by the lovely fertile lands all desolate of people, while the owners are compelled to congregate in small villages, and it has more than once been forced on my mind that the true policy would be to replace the present officials—estimable gentlemen they are, too, mostly—by men who can use both head and hands to scatter the people in small holdings over their country and teach them to become crofters. It could be done, and the country would be then enriched by a native race possessing property, and the race itself, tasting the joy of possession, would strive further to acquire and have an incentive to live that is now denied to it.

About the poll-tax I observe,—

(a.) It is unjust. Polynesians and free Indians pay no special tax, why then the Fijians? Because, answers an official, the poll-tax is merely a fee paid to the British power for its protection, and the security it gives to the Fijians in possession of their country. But the Fijians, in the interests of the communal system and the allied poll-tax, are being gathered off their lands, and the areas vacated are let on easy terms to untaxed alien settlers of all and whatever kinds.

(b.) The Fijians now pay a very large amount through the Customhouse, why tax them specially? The Government not long ago announced that last year the total spendable income of the native race was over £70,000. We will add to that the amount of the poll-tax—say, £19,000—making the total income, in round numbers, £90,000. Out of that total income Government takes first the £19,000 in direct taxation, and as nearly all the remaining £70,000 is spent in articles paying duties varying from 12½ to 40 per cent., does it not appear that the Government dips its hand too deeply into the Fijian's purse?

(c.) The poll-tax hangs heavily on the people. In provinces where it is easily raised it is hateful to the Natives; in some provinces, such as Ra and parts of Vanua Levu, it is positively oppressive. Imagine inland districts preparing soil, planting maize, hoeing and weeding it, pulling the cobs, drying and shelling the corn, carrying it to the coast on their backs, bagging and shipping it there free of freight to the buyer for 2s. a bushel! It is mere waste of time and of human energy and a prostitution of industry. I have discussed the poll-tax with many officers of the Government. I remember none who could defend it on any higher ground than the necessity of obtaining a revenue. Viewed in the cold clear light of justice, it cannot be defended at all that the original owners of the soil shall be taxed to the extent of nearly 40 per cent. of their gross income, while others better able to pay are exempt from special taxation. But the Fiji Government finds itself in control of a race ignorant of economics, helpless to protect itself from extortion, and having no means of making its voice heard; and so this Government, arming itself with the necessary enactments, goes forth to spoil the people annually of £19,000 more than its just dues. The people are like some patient beast of burden who, dimly conscious that its load is too heavy, staggers along because it fears the crack of the driver's whip; the *Lawa ni Talaidredre o Lawa ni Vakatubu ca*, &c. If the Fijians were more courageous, had their own newspapers, understood and could use the rights of public meeting, and could bring to bear on the Government the influences available to ourselves, poll-tax would not survive a year. But the Government needs the revenue, and so over-taxes the race that proves the easiest victim. How true is the trite observation that men do in a corporate capacity acts from which as individuals they would shrink with loathing. But the experience of mankind shows that there is something about the work of governing that proves strangely destructive of the sense of justice in those who take part in it. A statesman must not have too sensitive a conscience. The Fiji Government makes no mistakes in that direction.

3. The natives have been and are still compelled to do large amounts of free labour on roads and other public works, from which they personally derive very small benefit. The whole road from Nadroga to Viti Levu Bay was made by forced, unpaid, native labour. The road from Tavua to Suva, through the precipitous mountains of the interior, the road from Ba which junctions the Tavua Road at Nadarivatu, the road from Ba to Fort Carnarvon and through Navosa to Nadarivatu, the road from Viti Levu Bay that junctions the main road at Nubumakita, and many others too numerous to mention, were all, with few exceptions, made under compulsion by the natives, who got not a penny of remuneration and fed themselves into the bargain. And all this in addition to the poll-tax and Customs duties. The hand of the Government has been heavy indeed on the native population. Roads are desirable, but they should be paid for, not done for nothing, under compulsion, by one class of people already too heavily taxed.

4. For the maintenance of the communal system and the poll-tax the Fiji Government has woven about the natives a web of legislation that has been the grave of all liberty. Take *Lawa ni Talaidredre* and *Lawa ni Vakatubu ca*. In these two Ordinances alone the Government has forged for itself and its officials, English and native, most effective instruments, shall I say—of oppression. The Government did not mean to oppress, but it has oppressed, nevertheless. Both the above Ordinances were very dangerous weapons to place in the hands of native officials. During my residence in these islands I have been the indignant witness of many arbitrary and oppressive acts done by their means.

During a recent journey through the interior of Viti Levu I met an old man under police escort, on his way to Suva gaol. Happening to know him and also his family, I inquired the reason of his imprisonment. It was *Vakatubu ca* on two grounds. First, as town chief he opposed the appropriation of a piece of ground for tax purposes (poll-tax again) for the reason that it was required for planting food. Secondly, he opposed the removal of his village and the union of its people with another village. In this case one Provincial Inspector ordered the breadfruit-trees in the village to be cut down, and when that was done another Inspector decided to remove the village altogether. The old man opposed this, was charged with *Vakatubu ca*, and is now putting in six months for his courage. I met him on the way. He suffers from a complaint that makes walking a real torture, and this old man was sent staggering over the mountains from Rakiraki to Suva although he could have been sent round by steamer for 10s. To my thinking he has done nothing at all worthy of punishment. But that is where I think the Fiji Government has involved itself in a course that makes tyranny a necessity. To perpetuate communism and maintain the poll-tax *Lawa ni Talaidredre* and *Lawa ni Vakatumu ca* are essential, and it follows that conduct for which we applaud our Pym, our Hampdens, our Cobdens, and our Wilberforces become an indictable offence in Fiji. If Gladstone had been a Fijian, instead of his country sending him back to Parliament with an overwhelming following for denouncing the Government's cynical apathy over Bulgarian atrocities we should have seen him in a prisoners' procession in the streets of Suva, with hair cropped close and wearing a *sulu* plentifully besprinkled with broad arrows.

The Fiji Government has deprived the natives of all liberty. They pay about 40 per cent. of their gross income to the Treasury in addition to unpaid labour, they have no franchise and no representation. Their councils are under Government tutelage—one man, and one only, holds them in his hand, and when it happens that the hand is metallic and unsympathetic the natives are to be pitied. In Fiji a young man who feels the village boundaries to be too strait for him, and has aspirations and ambitions to attain to something above the rank of a mere hewer of wood and drawer of water, is met at the outset by an inflexible communal system that holds him in relentless grip. He would be a carpenter or a blacksmith, he would possess his own cottage and live on the fruits of his own labour, or he would seek for education and become in time the teacher of his fellows, but the commune says: "No, I need you to help meet my obligation; if you go, who will work for poll-tax? Who make roads? The employments you desire and the freedom they imply are not for you, but for Europeans, Indians, Polynesians, &c.; you must banish all thought of them. This little village is your world, stray beyond it at your peril; do not call yourself a man. Helot is your name, because men are free and you are bound. You may fret against the barriers, but my system must go on." And so Fijian young men may not choose their path in life nor avail themselves of opportunities that occur to them of learning trades. They may be broken in the process, but the communal system must be maintained.

5. The Fiji Government has made itself an object of hatred and dread to the natives. It rules by fear. Its foolish anxiety to regulate every detail of native life has led to the multiplication of ordinances that hedge the native round like the spikes in Regulus's barrel. The most law-abiding and well-meaning native can scarcely hope to pass through life without making frequent appearances before Magistrates to answer charges that in other countries would not be thought offences. It would be interesting to see a table for one year of punishments inflicted for offences against the Ordinances that uphold the communal and tax system. The present Governor wrote in a well-remembered message of the sheaves of Ordinances he found in Fiji. It cannot be said, however, that the burden of these sheaves has been made any lighter by the appointment of Inspectors, whose mere word, backed by *Lawa ni Talaidredre*, becomes a law; who, knowing nothing of, or caring less for, the customs and feelings of the people, ride rough-shod over them, and who, being foolishly elated by the absolute power bestowed upon them, make occasions to use it.

The Government of the natives has become a mere tyranny (I use this word in its original sense), and the greatest discontent is felt in a large part of the country. But this discontent is most voiceless; *Lawa ni Vakatumu ca* compels it to be dumb. If the test of successful Government is found in the wealth and happiness it places within reach of its subjects, the Fiji Government has miserably failed.

My conclusion, therefore, is that the natives of this country have found the present form of government anything but a blessing, and that the Government itself has been a huge and ghastly failure. The Government has not gone the right way to raise up a race of characterful people; it has rather succeeded in reducing all to one helpless level, and though the new inspectorships will give us clean villages, I am of opinion that they have got hold of the "wrong end of the stick," and that the true redemptive policy would be to break up the tribal and communal system; place the people, under efficient directorship, back on the land; help them to acquire useful animals and property; and, instead of bringing in Indians to fill our vacant areas, teach our own natives to become settlers. That would be a policy worthy of an enlightened Government, and in the end it would make the Fijians worth more to the Treasury than they are now.

Now, let us look at the attitude of the New Zealand Government to the Maoris.

In the past New Zealand made its own mistakes in dealing with its aboriginal population, and for that it has paid the price. It has also learned wisdom from its mistakes, and no one can now charge that colony with unfairness towards the Maoris.

- (1.) The Maoris have parliamentary representation.
- (2.) They have the franchise.
- (3.) They pay no poll-tax, but their equitable share of other imports.

(4.) An Act preventing private dealings (in land) gives them secure possession of their lands, and insures a just price. Government alone buys Maori land.

(5.) The Maoris are free.

(6.) The Maoris enjoy the benefit of free education.

(7.) The Maoris do no unpaid forced labour on roads and public works.

(8.) The Maoris are not enmeshed in fussy irritating legislation.

(9.) The Maoris do not suffer from a plague of English and native officials.

I conclude, therefore, that the Fijian natives have nothing to lose, but a great deal to gain, from a Federation that would free them from a Government whose hand is as ubiquitously heavy as that of the present Crown colony, and whose expensiveness leads to the reversal of the principles on which equitable taxation is based, and causes the heaviest burden to fall on the poor.

It would be worth while to work for Federation, if only as a way of obtaining opportunities for the discussion of native affairs, and of escape from the truculent discourtesy that seems always to have been, as it is now, the predominant feature of Crown Colony Governments.