

PART I.
Despatches from
the Governor.

chiefs, disappointed by the non-acceptance of their overtures to ourselves, have contracted some sort of engagement with an American Commissioner, involving exclusive concessions, and understood to contemplate the establishment of a naval station by the United States in the magnificent harbour of Pango-Pango. Considering, however, that the Government of the United States, while securing the advantages of influence over certain of the Pacific Island groups, have hitherto abstained from assuming sovereignty or responsibilities, and that the Senate has shown itself averse to the acquisition of distant territories, my Advisers think that should the Government delay to propose, or Congress hesitate to agree to, such an undertaking as is stated to be in contemplation, it may be possible to transfer once more the overtures of the chiefs to ourselves. • They have therefore moved me to solicit from Her Majesty's Government immediate permission to send a Commissioner there, and to avail themselves of such opportunity as may present itself either to preserve for New Zealand as a British possession equal rights and advantages with the United States, or to gain a more considerable footing in the event of the Government of the United States not following up their present advantage.

10. It would be desirable at the same time to establish friendly relations with the chiefs of the Friendly or Tonga group; but as it is understood that the Native Government is better organized and averse to foreign control, no question of sovereignty with regard to them now presents itself. It would, however, be intended, by maintaining friendly relations with them, to secure, if possible, their possession, should internal dissensions or decay render them available to foreign acquisition.

11. My Advisers, in their present Memorandum, claim for the Government of New Zealand a special aptitude for dealing with a native population; and it must be remembered that the inhabitants of the Samoan group are of the same type, and indeed are believed to be the very stock of the Maori population of New Zealand. I am aware that this assertion of my Advisers is one that may be controverted, but I believe that it must be admitted that, whatever mistakes have been committed, the intention of the Government of New Zealand towards the Natives, from its first establishment, has been more just and equitable than that of any European settlers who have secured dominion over a coloured race, if that of the English, and perhaps the French, in India be set aside.

12. My Advisers do not attempt at this moment to define the details of a plan which must depend upon so many previous contingencies; but they notice as possible alternatives, government or rather control by officers upon a footing, as I understand it, similar to that of the Residents at Native Courts in India, or as Provinces as an extension of the New Zealand General Government. I may be permitted to say that, looking at the geographical circumstances, that of the Mysore Commissioner would appear to me a more suitable type than the former, and that great difficulties would arise from the reception into a parliamentary union of Provinces, themselves having responsible government, of one or more in which, from the nature of the case, representative institutions appear to be utterly impossible. If those imply equal representation irrespective of race, the white settlers would decline them, as they do in Fiji; if they do not, they would be a sham and an injustice. Moreover, in this respect New Zealand offers no true analogy, inasmuch as, owing to her temperate climate, the white race soon outnumbered the coloured; whereas in the Pacific, white labour being impossible, the great preponderance of the coloured races must be kept up by importation, should it fail from natural causes.

13. That some good government through colonial agency is possible I do not doubt, and that it would be greatly preferred to the present anarchy and its attendant evils and contingent dangers by all the British Colonies of the South, whether prepared themselves to undertake it or not, your Lordship is already informed; but at the present day, and with the heavy cost of their own development, any one of them could undertake it at great disadvantage and, as it seems to me, with infinitely inferior prospects of benefit to the subject race, than would accrue were the Imperial Government to do so with a due recognition of the magnitude of the task and with corresponding grasp.

14. At the same time, my Advisers are prepared to propose to the General Assembly the measures necessary to give effect to the decision of Her Majesty's Government, should it be to empower this Colony to undertake the government, in any form or degree that might be selected, of such of the islands as might be now or from time to time submitted to us by their chiefs or populations. It may be expected that such arrangements, whether with Her Majesty's Government or with one of her possessions, would become more numerous according to the success and advantage to the native communities which might attend the first experiments.

15. Since writing the foregoing, my attention has been called to the statements in Sydney newspapers, that, at the instance of his Advisers, Sir Hercules Robinson has informed your Lordship, by telegraph, of the desire of the Colony of New South Wales that Her Majesty's Government should interfere to prevent the consequences of the present anarchy in Fiji. My Advisers desire that I should express as their view that the state of affairs in Fiji imperatively requires the control of Her Majesty's Government, and that in the event of their preferring to empower a Colonial Government to undertake that control rather than do so themselves, New Zealand is that Colony which has the most natural affinity to Fiji and the adjacent groups, both in regard to its comparative proximity and to the greater facilities of intercourse afforded by the prevailing winds.

I have, &c.,

JAMES FERGUSSON,

Governor.

The Right Hon. the Earl of Kimberley.