

Zealand were given to understand that an offer by the Colony to provide for the government of the islands would be entertained, it is probable the Assembly would sanction such an offer being made.

New Zealand is better fitted than New South Wales to undertake the charge, on account of its nearer proximity, and its familiarity with the government of a race similar to that which comprises the bulk of the population of Fiji.

In establishing a government at Fiji, the problem to be worked out is to divide the government fairly between the two races. Only of late years, and after the Native race ceased to be the more numerous, has this been sufficiently realized in New Zealand. But when the Colony was left to its own guidance, it arrived at the conclusion that the plough, and the axe, and the pen were preferable agents to the sword and the rifle; and the Maori race has eagerly responded to the policy.

The Maoris themselves would be excellent agents for extending to the Fiji Islands the desire for government and the knowledge of how to govern. The Maori schools, which are being so plentifully established in the Colony, could doubtless be made available for training young Fijians. The New Zealand colonists have already largely directed their attention to Fiji. They have established a bank there, with its head-quarters in New Zealand. Respecting the natural position which New Zealand occupies in regard to Fiji, the following extract from the Report of Mr. Thurston, 1866, then Her Majesty's Consul in Fiji and Tonga, printed in a Blue Book presented to the House of Commons, is instructive:—"Auckland, in New Zealand, is naturally the depôt for the South Sea Islands trade. It is one-third of the distance nearer to Fiji than Sydney is. As the prevailing winds are fair both for going and returning, merchandise from Europe can be landed there and at the same prices and in about the same time as at Sydney, and the return voyage is much shorter." The laws of New Zealand, including those which enable revenue to be raised, would in great measure be at once applicable to Fiji. In short, all the experience of self-government gained by New Zealand should fit it for the task of establishing a Colonial Government at Fiji, the group to become part of the Colony, or to be governed as a separate Province, or in the form of a Protectorate, according as, after discussion, might be found most desirable.

Precedent is not wanting for the suggested course. The Commission issued to the first Governor of New South Wales, Captain Phillip, gave him a jurisdiction which included and extended beyond the Fijian group. New Zealand was for some time actually governed from New South Wales. The Mauritius now governs the Seychelles. The Cape Government exercises, it is believed, or has exercised, protectorate rights over distinct territories; and not long since, to Canada was assigned the duty of governing Manitoba.

As already stated, the Premier only asks that the Assembly may be invited to make a proposal. He is not prepared to guarantee that it will do so.

The terms upon which the duty should be undertaken would of course have to be considered. The Earl of Kimberley, in a Despatch under date 16th March, 1871, wrote:—"It would be impossible for this country to undertake the responsibility of the government of the islands, without a sufficient force to support its authority." In the event of annexation to New Zealand, this would probably not be required, and Her Majesty's Government would be spared much expense which would undoubtedly follow independent annexation. In consideration of this saving, it is to be presumed some assistance would be rendered at the outset; but it would be premature to discuss the point, or even to make it a condition.

Wellington, 8th April, 1874.

JULIUS VOGEL.

No. 7.

ARRANGEMENTS NEW ZEALAND MIGHT MAKE WITH CHIEFS OF THE NAVIGATOR GROUP.

THE Premier has the honor to call His Excellency's attention to a Despatch from Lord Kimberley (No. 79, November 18th, 1873), in answer to one from His Excellency (No. 65, August 1st, 1873), communicating, as stated by Lord Kimberley, the wish of Ministers, "that the Imperial Government should at once take steps to prevent the Navigator Islands from falling into foreign hands, or should allow the New Zealand Government to make such arrangements with the chiefs of the islands as will protect New Zealand interests." Lord Kimberley adds, "As the nature of the arrangements which the New Zealand Government desires to make with the chiefs of the Navigator Islands is not stated, Her Majesty's Government are unable to form an opinion upon this application;" but he concludes by stating, "They would not, however, be disposed to sanction any steps which could lay this country under obligations to interfere in the affairs of these islands."

2. The conclusion arrived at by Lord Kimberley seemed so definite, that it was not at the time considered necessary to enter into explanations as to the arrangements the New Zealand Government desired to make with the chiefs of the Navigator Islands. It has, however, been pointed out to the Premier that silence on this point might cause the correspondence to appear broken; and since the question of the future of the South Sea Islands has been taken up in another form, it is well that the point referred to by his Lordship should not be lost sight of.

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