

it was considered expedient to obtain signatures to a document emanating from it on the question of self-government, it was signed in a few days by upwards of 800 adult males, when the total of that class in the settlement did not exceed 1,200.

11. The evidence above referred to does, it is submitted, prove incontestably the repugnance entertained by the colonists to Sir George Grey's proposed Constitution, and that under the circumstances some decided course of action, independent of his opinion, ought to be pursued. In 1847 the colonists were led to expect the immediate bestowal of self-government by the measure which then received the sanction of Parliament. Within six months their hopes were frustrated by the Suspension Act, and they were remitted to the institutions under the old charter of 1840. In another year there was forced upon them, against their almost unanimous remonstrance, Sir George Grey's Provincial Council measure, which, after one session, broke down, in consequence of the opposition of the colonists and its inherent defects. They are now again threatened with the imposition, against their express and almost unanimous wish, of another Constitution (and that intended to be permanent), framed by Governor Grey, without consulting them, and which it is certain can never be successfully brought into operation against their desire.

12. The chief difference between Sir George Grey's proposed Constitution and that which the colonists desire is one of fundamental principle. He proposes to extend the provincial form of Government at present existing, which is a costly and cumbrous system of centralisation; and he expressly intimates his intention of gradually rendering it still more centralised by the absorption of such local powers as he may at first bestow. The colonists, on the other hand, desire institutions truly municipal, in the sense in which the word was used by the late Sir Robert Peel, when Prime Minister, in the debates on New Zealand in 1845; and, instead of their becoming more and more centralised, they wish to see them more and more localised, as in the progress of the colony local interests become more marked and separate. Besides which, there are various important points on which they are at total variance, such as the element of nomineeism, the Civil list, the extent of the veto of the Home Government, and others.

WILLIAM FOX,

Honorary Political Agent of the Colonists of Wellington.

No. 6.

F. PEEL, Esq., to W. Fox, Esq.

SIR,—

Downing Street, 5th February, 1852.

I am directed by Earl Grey to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 24th instant, together with the papers which accompanied it, on the subject of the present state of affairs in New Zealand.

I am, &c.,

F. PEEL.