

It is also hoped to secure a free market for our products and manufactures, and thus to enhance our general prosperity. The population may be placed at 3,000 Europeans, who own about one-tenth of the area of the islands, and who have invested approximately £2,500,000 in their development. The native population is 115,000.

The revenue amounts to £100,000 per annum, and is equal even to present extravagant demands, so that the self-supporting position of the colony is well assured, apart from the simpler form of Government it is hoped to obtain.

For New Zealand, it is anticipated that the political protection and assistance so rendered will secure a sensible extension of her commerce, open up a wider market for her products, and more firmly establish her natural position as the colony exercising the dominant influence in the South Seas.

In view of these mutual advantages, and of the fact assumed, from Mr. Thurston's action, that the proposition will not be unfavourably regarded by the Imperial Government, I am directed to solicit your all powerful interest and co-operation in the endeavour to bring this matter to a successful issue. The petition to both Houses of Parliament is now in course of preparation and will be forwarded as early as possible, and I am instructed to inquire whether you will kindly take charge of its presentation, thereby making it a ministerial matter.

In any case I am directed to bespeak your favourable consideration of the proposal, and to entreat for it your cordial interest and assistance. I have written the Hon. Sir Julius Vogel on the subject, also Sir George Grey and Major Atkinson.

Awaiting your favourable reply.

The Hon. Robert Stout,
Premier of New Zealand, Wellington.

I have, &c.,
T. H. PRICHARD,
Honorary Secretary.

Enclosure.

[Extract from the *Fijian Times*, 1st April, 1885.]

THE public meeting held in the hall of the Mechanics' Institute on Saturday evening, with the object of taking steps to procure the incorporation of Fiji with New Zealand, was the largest and most enthusiastic that has taken place in the town since the appointment of the delegates to the Federal Convention, with a somewhat similar object, two years ago. The hall was filled, every seat being occupied; and, more significant still of the strong hold of the subject on the public mind, there were a number of ladies in the gallery, who evidently took great interest in the proceedings. Perfect unanimity prevailed throughout, and the frequent hearty bursts of applause which greeted telling passages in the addresses proved how thoroughly one and all were in accord as to the desirability of the proposed union.

The chair was taken by the Worshipful the Warden, who explained the object of the meeting, and read the numerously-signed requisition pursuant to which he had convened it. He said it was almost needless to remark that such a request, and for so very desirable a purpose, had met with his ready acquiescence. The meeting had been called for the earliest moment, so that they might strike the iron while it was hot, and Saturday night had been chosen as the one which would best suit the convenience of the greatest number. He was pleased to see so crowded a meeting; and he thought that among those present none would hesitate to affirm that at no time had Fiji stood more in need of a helping hand than now, and it appeared that no time could be more suitable for putting forth a vigorous effort to obtain assistance such as they required. If all were united, and if they succeeded in enlisting the sympathies of New Zealand, there would appear to be no doubt of success. The mere fact that this step being publicly advocated by the Hon. J. B. Thurston in London was an evidence in which there was more than appeared on its face. It gave assurance that the proposition would not be unfavourably regarded by the Home Government, and with this prospect the way was clear. He would not detain the meeting longer, but would call on Mr. Ledingham to move the first resolution.

Mr. Ledingham, who was received with loud applause, said: The Chairman had just informed them that the meeting had been called to take the first step toward securing, if possible, the annexation of Fiji by New Zealand. As to the desirability of this course he did not think there could be two opinions. The state of things in Fiji was now so utterly deplorable that any change must be one for the better, while the prospect of such a change as that which would be brought about by its incorporation with New Zealand promised salvation to the one and substantial benefits to the other. The resolution he had to propose was to the following effect: "That this meeting hails with unqualified satisfaction the action of the Hon. J. B. Thurston, C.M.G., in advocating the annexation of Fiji by New Zealand; and that, while heartily concurring with him as to its extreme desirability, it pledges itself to exhaust every effort in the endeavour to effect this object." Upon this subject he hoped all present would be prepared to give a full and free opinion, so that no doubt might remain as to the earnestness and unanimity of public feeling. In support of the resolution he would run back over the past, and review to some extent the effect of Crown-colony government on Fiji. All there who were connected with the colony at the time of annexation would remember that despatch of Lord Carnarvon, published about the time of the hoisting of the British flag, in which he set forth the advantages which the annexation would secure to the European settlers. One of these was that landed estate would immediately increase in value, and property then worth but £1 per acre would speedily be worth £5. He would ask those present had this forecast been realized? Was that the position of affairs at that moment. There could be but one answer, No! And why was this? Because from the advent of Sir Arthur Gordon the whole policy of the Government had