

1900.
NEW ZEALAND.

PACIFIC ISLANDS:

LETTER FROM THE BRITISH RESIDENT FORWARDING PETITION OF ARIKIS OF RAROTONGA, ATIU, MAUKE, AND MITIARO ASKING FOR ANNEXATION TO NEW ZEALAND UNDER THE CONDITIONS SET FORTH IN THE PETITION.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

MY LORD,—

British Residency, Rarotonga, 8th September, 1900.

I have the honour to forward herewith a petition from the Arikis of Rarotonga, Atiu, Mauke, and Mitiaro asking for annexation under the conditions set forth in the petition. I have also to inform you that the Mataipos and Rangatiras of Rarotonga have indorsed the action of their Arikis, and therefore the inhabitants of this island may be said to be absolutely unanimous in their desire for annexation. The inferior people have not, of course, been asked their opinion on this question; but I am in the position to say that they are more in favour of annexation than any other class, since they hope to benefit by the change.

I have not spoken to the Arikis of Mangaia on this subject, for I have not been able to visit them, and I do not think that it is necessary to do so. The action taken by Rarotonga will govern the whole group, and the Mangaians will offer no opposition to the will of the majority.

I have, &c.,

W. E. GUDGEON, British Resident.

His Excellency the Earl of Ranfurly, K.C.M.G., Governor of New Zealand.

WE, the Arikis of Rarotonga, together with Ngamaru Ariki, who represents the three islands of Atiu, Mauke, and Mitiaro, being assembled in Council at Avarua, in the Island of Rarotonga, on this 6th day of September, 1900, do hereby petition His Excellency the Governor of New Zealand to annex the Islands of Rarotonga, Atiu, Mauke, and Mitiaro to the British Empire. And whereas we are of the same race as the Maoris of New Zealand, and all our trade is with those islands, we are willing to become part and portion of that colony: Provided always,—

(1.) That the Parliament of the Cook Islands shall be abolished, and in place thereof a "Council of Arikis," under the Presidency of the British Resident, with Makea Ariki as Chief of the Government, shall be substituted.

(2.) That the land rights of the people of these islands shall not be vitiated by annexation, and if any question shall arise hereafter as to those rights, such question shall be submitted for the final decision of the High Court of the Cook Islands.

(3.) We ask His Excellency to use his influence to the end that the following islands may be included in the federation with New Zealand, viz.: Penrhyn, Manihiki, Rakaanga, Palmerston, and Pukapuka (Danger Island), and, if possible, Niue. We ask this because the inhabitants of the islands in question are of the same race as ourselves, and are, we believe, already British subjects.

(4.) And whereas the Legislature and Government of the Cook Islands have already adopted the criminal law of New Zealand as a guide for the High Court, and have passed certain statutes suitable to the requirements of this small community, we ask that such of these statutes as shall be found in accordance with the spirit of English law shall be respected, and that the general laws of New Zealand shall only be introduced as required and adopted by the Council of Arikis.

(5.) And whereas the administration of the Cook Islands has hitherto been carried on with the utmost economy, all official appointments to the public service of the Cook Islands hereafter to be made shall be subject to the approval of the Island Council; and no public officer shall be dispensed with without the same approval.