

REPLY.

GENTLEMEN,—

I beg you to accept my warm thanks for your congratulations on my arrival, and for the cordial and hearty welcome which you have given me.

I ever believed that a bright and prosperous future lay before the Province of Otago, if its inhabitants gave full scope to the enterprise and energy which are the characteristics of their race. In these respects you have shown yourselves to have been in no respect behind your forefathers, and the result is that, the blessing of Divine Providence having attended your efforts, I now view, as you state, with pride and gratification, the wonderful changes which a few short years have effected in this place.

Your Queen will very graciously receive the intelligence of your loyalty, your attachment, and your prosperity, which will now reach her.

You may rely that I will at all times do my utmost to promote the benevolent objects held in view by the Friendly Societies which you represent. I have always striven to do this, but the warm reception you have this day given, and your so friendly wishes for my welfare and happiness, shall act as a new incentive to me to exert myself to aid those who endeavour to alleviate the wants and misfortunes of their fellow men.

G. GREY.

To His Excellency Sir GEORGE GREY, K.C.B., Governor of the Colony of New Zealand.

The Petition of the undersigned inhabitants of Dunedin, humbly sheweth—

1. That the North and Middle Islands of New Zealand, being separated by Cook Strait, are essentially distinct.

2. That in consequence of the large Native population on the North Island, the legislation for that Island requires to be of a different character from that which is suitable for the Middle Island.

3. That the late Maori war, which was confined entirely to the North Island, has cost the whole Colony of New Zealand a large sum of money.

4. That, while willing to pay the proportion of the debt which has been incurred by the Colony to carry on the war, your petitioners are of opinion that all future legislation and all further action with regard to the Native population, should be left entirely to the inhabitants of the North Island, and also that any liabilities arising from such action should be chargeable only against the North Island.

5. Your petitioners therefore pray that, in order to accomplish this, your Excellency will be pleased to use your endeavours to effect a separation of the two Islands as regards their governments; just and equitable arrangements being made as to all past liabilities.

And your petitioners will ever pray.

[Over 2000 signatures were appended to the petition, which was beautifully engrossed and illuminated, and was mounted and tastefully finished.]

Mr. Dick said—In presenting this petition to your Excellency, I may state that there is a wide spread feeling existing amongst this community, that it is necessary that every effort should now be made to secure the separation of the two Islands. The inhabitants of the Middle Island have hitherto assisted earnestly in the prosecution of the Maori war. They think, however, that the war being now finished, it would be well that the two Islands should hereafter be separated: so that if there is war in the future, the inhabitants of the North Island, who are especially interested, and who know better how to manage the Maoris than we in the Middle can know, may have the management and the responsibility to themselves. As to all existing liabilities, the people of the Middle Island are satisfied and quite prepared to bear a fair share—to accept, and to aid a perfectly just and equitable settlement; but as to the future, they respectfully ask that your Excellency will endeavour to procure for them, as from this time, a separation between the two Islands.

Mr. Dick presented the petition.

REPLY.

GENTLEMEN,—

On receiving from you this important and numerous signed petition, I beg to assure you that I will, in compliance with those constitutional usages on which the future good government of this Colony so largely depends, cause it to be transmitted to my Responsible Advisers for their consideration and advice as to the steps I should take in relation to it.

G. GREY.

To His Excellency Sir GEORGE GREY, K.C.B., Governor and Commander-in-Chief in and over the Islands of New Zealand, and Vice-Admiral of the same.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

We, the undersigned, representing the sister Constitutions of England, Scotland, and Ireland, and on behalf of the free and accepted Masons of Otago, holding under the aforesaid constitutions, desire to approach your Excellency with assurances of the continuation of that attachment to the person of Her Most Gracious Majesty our Queen, and of loyalty to the Throne, which has ever characterized our ancient and illustrious Order.

We hail the arrival of your Excellency in the Province of Otago with the more pleasure that it affords us an opportunity of demonstrating to your Excellency that freemasonry has grown with its growth, and strengthened with its strength, and that the great and unalterable principles of the Craft, as recognized and established for centuries in our mother country, are firmly maintained in this far distant country.

We pray that the Almighty Architect of the Universe may continue to bestow upon your Excellency the blessings of wisdom, of health and prosperity, and that our beloved Queen (herself a Mason's daughter) may long live to reign over the realm of Britain, and in the hearts of her faithful and devoted subjects, the Brethren of the Mystic Tie.

And may brotherly love continue.