

It is obvious that it would be impossible to arrive at any satisfactory agreement within a reasonable period by means of written correspondence as to the terms on which such a treaty should be settled, and it has therefore been thought desirable to despatch delegates from this colony to negotiate with your Government on the subject. Those delegates are Mr. F. J. Moss, a member of our House of Representatives, who was formerly a resident in Fiji, and Mr. W. Seed, the permanent head of the Customs Department here, an officer of high standing in the Civil Service and of long experience. These gentlemen will be officially accredited to your Government by the Governor of this colony, and I trust that on their arrival in Fiji it may be convenient for your Government to treat with them.

I may observe that, whilst material advantages to the two countries would undoubtedly result from increased trade between them, still, those that must accrue to Fiji from its finding in New Zealand a ready outlet for its produce are so manifest that I am sanguine that your Government will not be indifferent to them, and that they will be disposed to co-operate cordially with this colony in coming to an arrangement by which those advantages may be permanently secured. Necessarily, any arrangements that may be provisionally agreed upon will be subject to the approval of the General Assembly.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Suva, Fiji.

I have, &c.,
JULIUS VOGEL.

No. 9.

The Hon Sir J. VOGEL to the AGENT-GENERAL.

SIR,—

Government Buildings, Wellington, 25th March, 1886.

I have the honour to forward you copies of letters which have passed between the Hon. and Rev. Shirley Baker, Premier of Tonga, and myself, concerning a Customs agreement with Tonga, Fiji, &c. The agreement therein proposed was approved by the Cabinet; and Mr. Moss, M.H.R., and Mr. Seed, Secretary of Customs, are proceeding with the Rev. Mr. Baker to Fiji, with the view of submitting the proposals to the Governor there.

The object of making the arrangement with Tonga, and again making that subject to an arrangement with Fiji, was to get the aid of the Tongan Government: besides that, Mr. Baker is likely to render aid in inducing the Government at Samoa to fall in with the same arrangement.

The legal position of this matter seems to me to be this: New Zealand, under our Constitution Act, has power to arrange with Fiji or any colony. Subsequently, by separate Act, the other Australian Colonies were given similar powers. The Act (36 Vict., cap. 22, "The Australian Colonies Duties Act, 1873") does not include Fiji; but, as Fiji has no Constitution by Act, the Crown could authorize the agreement with New Zealand. As to the agreements with Tonga, Samoa, and Tahiti, the Crown would probably have to make them on behalf of New Zealand.

I hope no technical difficulties will be allowed to interfere with arrangements which would so vastly benefit the trade and prospects of all the islands concerned, including New Zealand.

As we do not know the views of the Government of Fiji, and have not submitted the matter to Parliament, it may seem premature to bring it before you. But you take such interest in all matters relating to the islands, and are so well acquainted with the subject, that it is desirable that no information should be withheld from you. Besides, if the matter is to proceed, your being in possession of the papers will enable us to cable you; and with that view I append suitable code phrases.

The Agent-General for New Zealand, 7, Westminster Chambers,
London, S.W.

I have, &c.,
JULIUS VOGEL.

No. 10.

His Honour the ADMINISTRATOR of the GOVERNMENT of FIJI to His Excellency the GOVERNOR of NEW ZEALAND.

SIR,—

Government House, Suva, Fiji, 15th April, 1886.

I have had the honour of receiving your Excellency's despatch of the 23rd ultimo, accrediting to me Messrs. F. J. Moss and W. Seed as the representatives of your Excellency's Government in respect of a commercial treaty into which this Government is invited to enter with New Zealand.

It has afforded me pleasure to receive the gentlemen named, both of whom I have known for many years.

The proposals of your Excellency's Government have reached me somewhat in the way of a surprise; but have, notwithstanding, received from myself and Advisers all the consideration possible in the brief space of time at command.

I regret to add that my Government does not find the proposals submitted by Messrs. Moss and Seed acceptable; but, with the object of promoting commerce between the two colonies, it is ready to make a counter-proposal and send to New Zealand a member of Government to discuss the project with your Excellency's Ministers.

It is hardly necessary for me to observe that any arrangements made would, as regards Fiji, be subject to the approval of Her Majesty's Government.

I have, &c.,
JOHN B. THURSTON.

His Excellency Sir W. F. D. Jervois, G.C.M.G., Governor of New Zealand.