

Enclosure.

To His Honour JOHN BATES THURSTON, C.M., Administrator of the Colony of Fiji, &c.

THE petition of the undersigned humbly sheweth:

1. That your petitioners are respectively merchants, planters, or traders carrying on business in this colony.
2. That your petitioners are aware that two special Commissioners are at present on a mission to the Government of this colony with a view to arrange, if possible, the basis of an agreement of reciprocity as regards the remission of duty on imports introduced from either colony to the other.
3. That your petitioners view such a proposal with great favour, as contemplated to advance the interests of all classes of the community in this colony.
4. That in the opinion of your petitioners such an opportunity for advancing the general welfare of the colony should not be lost.
5. That, though an absolute reciprocity may not be possible or practicable, that a remission might be arranged on articles of New Zealand production or manufacture imported into this colony.
6. That the loss to the revenue involved in such remission would be made up as far as possible by reduction in expenditure, or by a rearrangement of the incidence of taxation, the duty lost by remission on the articles of New Zealand production or manufacture being transferred to other articles not so produced or manufactured and used by same class of consumers.
7. That the articles of production favoured by the reciprocity arrangement should be made to contribute to the revenue a large percentage of the revenue lost and not otherwise made good.
8. That your petitioners are convinced that, were the New Zealand markets to admit even two or three articles of Fiji production free of duty, such as sugar, tea, and maize, that the effect upon these industries, and consequently upon the general state of the colony, would be most satisfactory; and your petitioners pray that your Honour will take into consideration the foregoing petition and give effect to your petitioners' prayer as far as possible; and your petitioners will ever pray, &c.

GEORGE MORGAN AND CO.,

E. W. FENNER,

Manager, New Zealand Sugar Works,
And fifty-five other *bonâ fide* merchants, traders, and
planters.

Levuka, 14th April, 1886.

No. 14.

The Hon. Sir JULIUS VOGEL to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY, &c., Fiji.

SIR,—

Government Buildings, Wellington, 1st May, 1886.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 15th April.

2. I shall be obliged by your conveying to His Honour the Officer Administering the Government of the Colony of Fiji my thanks for the courteous attention he gave to the representations of the delegates from New Zealand.

3. I am sorry that longer time was not afforded to His Honour to consider the proposals. It did not occur to me to send them in advance of the delegates.

4. I venture to think that had Fiji accepted the proposals its revenue would not have suffered, because some of its duties would have been increased; and, besides, its tariff is so slender that there would have been no difficulty in making up any deficiency by other or enlarged duties. But, in fact, such necessity would not have arisen, for the market which would have been open to Fijian products would have greatly advanced that colony. The Kingdom of Hawaii has progressed, I believe, remarkably under its treaty with the United States; its population has greatly increased, and its trade out and home amounts to about three millions sterling annually.

5. The contention that whatever arrangement is made by Fiji with New Zealand must be open to the other colonies stands, I fear, very much in the way of making such an arrangement as would be of service to Fiji.

6. His Honour asks for the admission of Fijian products into the other colonies at reduced duties in return for the admission of butter, hams, timber, &c., into Fiji. If he will calculate the value of the duties now chargeable in Fiji on the articles he will admit free, and the duties the colonies exact on the two Fijian products alone of sugar and tobacco, for which he seeks reduced duties, he will be able to realize that he is asking the colonies to make a great sacrifice.

7. One colony might make such a sacrifice—as New Zealand was, I think, prepared to do—in the hope of Fiji advancing to a position which would make its trade valuable, and give a return for the services rendered. But what His Honour asks is, that the colonies should make large sacrifices of revenue now leviable on Fijian products for no adequate return they would be assured of gaining.

8. I could have understood His Honour saying that he saw more advantage in making an arrangement with Victoria, and that he would prefer doing so. Queensland and New South Wales, being sugar-producing colonies, would not be inclined to make any arrangement such as New Zealand has proposed. Possibly Victoria might. I doubt it, because Victoria can procure sugar cheaper from Queensland, and making such an arrangement with Fiji might be regarded as unfriendly to Queensland.

9. It is different with New Zealand, which, from its position, is obviously destined to draw round it an island confederation, united by bonds of trade, and linked together by customs arrangements.

10. Even were Victoria disposed to make the same arrangement, I thought Fiji might prefer making it with New Zealand. The population of New Zealand, it is true, is not yet equal to that