

We may go twenty or fifty years before such a chance occurs again. Remember, "There is a tide in the affairs of men which leads on to fortune." We are working for a country we believe in—we live in—the cannibal islands. We are here to-night the makers of an Empire. (Cheers.) I believe in enthusiasm; it is the salt of life. The man who has sunk so low as to worry his soul over a shilling increase on a dozen meats or the cost of a new frock I do not appeal to—he had better not join in this object; but, on the other hand, to those who put their shoulder to the wheel I say, let us do the best we can to forward this important movement. (Loud cheers.)

The Chairman called upon Mr. Garner-Jones to speak to the resolution. He said: Mr. Chairman, gentlemen,—Federation to us of Fiji means—in a nutshell—progression. We, like our forefathers, are naturally conservative in our feelings; but when we are convinced that changes are necessary we can also exhibit that dogged obstinacy and determination that is the heritage of our race, and which in the defence of Mafeking we have had the latest instance. (Cheers.) To attain our object we must sink all petty local jealousies; we must have no Levuka, no Suva. We must be united Fiji. This is undoubtedly one of the finest countries in the world, and one ruined by over-government. I do not hesitate in saying that a large business firm, or a company, in any of the adjacent colonies could run Fiji successfully as a department of their business. Now, we are not going to obtain federation in a rush—there are difficulties which, to be overcome, must be recognised. I place the principal of them under these heads, and in their order of importance: ignorance, officialism, and the labour question. With the first we collectively and individually must grapple. It will be our duty to put the matter before the public in its proper light, and to propagate all information bearing on the subject. The second obstacle is one to be naturally expected. A certain class have vested interests, as it were, in the Fiji of to-day, and to a superficial observer it would appear that any such change as federation means would be to them fatal. It may be so; but they would have at least the consolation of knowing that they suffered in a good cause. The good of the country must be weighed, and no consideration of or for one sect or section must deter us. The third point—the labour question—is, I take it, a matter of detail, not difficult of arrangement by the powers that be, but one, I am afraid, that will be largely used by opponents of federation. Forewarned is forearmed. On the other hand, what advantages do we obtain? In one word, all that is meant by the word civilisation: railways, roads, regular steam-service. We shall be a part of a concrete whole, but none the less a part of that Empire we so much love. Taxation reduced by increased population and decreased officialism, we shall be to New Zealand the province that makes her complete in herself; we shall offer her the advantages of the tropics, and she will reciprocate with the fruits and produce of the temperate zone. Fiji is New Zealand's geographical and commercial complement, and as such we shall be a respected ally. Our agriculture will be fostered; capitalists will have confidence, and the long-extinct biped, the small planter, will appear as of old. There will be no bitter competition as would be if we federated with the Australian Commonwealth. Our position will be unique. Do not think that New Zealand has nothing to gain. The New Zealand Government is by no means sleepy. It recognises full well our value. As to the details of future government, that is not for us to consider. We are here to-night to simply affirm a principle—namely, that it is desirable to federate with New Zealand, and I therefore commend the resolution to your earnest consideration. (Cheers.)

The Chairman called on Mr. Riemenschneider, Warden of Suva, to address the meeting. He was seconded with cheers.

Mr. Riemenschneider: Mr. Chairman, gentlemen—I must say that we feel very honoured by the invitation extended to us by Mr. Solomon to come to Levuka, and express our views on federation. Now, federation is a pet scheme of mine, and has been for a considerable time past. When Mr. Berkeley and I entered the Suva Town Board we drew up a list of ideas we had in view. Among them, in fact, at the head of the list, stood federation. At that time my idea was to federate with New South Wales, but since then the Commonwealth Bill has been introduced. And, further, the question of black labour would prove fatal to Australian federation. Under no consideration would the employment of black labour be permitted. A few weeks ago we received a visit from Mr. Seddon and I thought it was a very fit opportunity to introduce the idea of federation with New Zealand. He told us in Suva that stress of weather was the cause which he had to thank for his visit to Fiji. But I happened to see a paragraph in a newspaper, a copy of which I hold, that clearly stated the intention of the Premier of New Zealand to visit our colony during his trip. (Mr. Riemenschneider read the extract). So apparently it would appear that the very scheme I had in view has entered the mind of Mr. Seddon. Now, New Zealand is undoubtedly a great power in the South Pacific. We have, to-day, in our hands the opportunity of bringing this, the object of our meeting, to a successful issue. We are not represented in our own Government. It is idle to assert the contrary. Mr. Thomas has told you that we have tried in the past to federate with Melbourne and New South Wales, and the result. I came to Fiji with the intention of living here; this is my adopted home and my lot and future is cast in its destiny. If we have failed in the past, there is no reason why we should not try again. There is no time like the present, when all the colonies have done so well in the Transvaal crisis. Their claims cannot be shelved. The Imperial Government must recognise their strength and power. Any request made at the present time by federated Australia or New Zealand must be received with great consideration by the Imperial Government. From the extract I have just read it appears that the federation of Fiji with New Zealand is not a strange idea to the Imperial Government: that such a proposition would at least be well received. There was a great amount of consideration shown us when we remember that Mr. Seddon came down to see the place for himself. I think that if federation came about it would be the greatest thing that could happen for the benefit of Fiji. The exports of Fiji are at present very few. But we can manufacture staple articles of food such as sugar, tea, coffee, cocoa. We can look for no encouragement or help from our present form of government towards developing our resources. We cannot expect capitalists to simply experiment and risk their money in developing a country in which the Government offer no assistance or