

"5. It is under these circumstances and for these reasons that the Ordinance is introduced, and I am confident that it will commend itself to every right-thinking man in Fiji. Liberty of speech is no doubt an inestimable privilege, and volumes have been written on the priceless nature of this heritage of the Briton; but I have yet to learn that in a mixed community like ours, where the coloured men outnumber the white by some 30 to 1, it should be extended so as to permit its being used for the creation and propagation of disaffection and disturbance amongst a semi-civilised, semi-educated, and excitable race of aborigines."

The Hon. the Acting Attorney-General moved the first reading of an Ordinance to make further provision for the peace and good order of the colony.

Seconded by the Hon. the Receiver-General, and carried.

The Ordinance was read a first time, and is as follows:—

*"Ordinance to make Further Provision for the Peace and Good Order of the Colony."*

"Whereas it is expedient to make further provision for the peace and good order of the colony:

"Be it therefore enacted by the Governor, with the advice and consent of the Legislative Council, as follows:—

"1. For the purposes of this Ordinance 'Fijian' shall mean any aboriginal native of Fiji.

"2. Any person who shall cause or attempt to cause any Fijian to be disaffected towards the Government, or who shall induce or attempt to induce any Fijian to take any action having for its object the subversion or alteration of the present form of government shall be guilty of an offence under this Ordinance, and shall be liable on summary conviction to imprisonment with or without hard labour for any term not exceeding six months."

The Hon. the Acting Attorney-General moved the suspension of the Standing Orders. Seconded by the Hon. the Receiver-General.

Hon. W. Burton objected to the Ordinance being rushed through. If it was so important, members should be given time to consider it. They should not be forced here before having duly considered the Bill, and its bearing on other points.

His Excellency, in reply, said that the Ordinance was an important one, and was also of extreme urgency. It was only a very few lines, and should be easily grasped by any intelligent person in a few minutes.

On the motion being put, all the members voted in its favour, with the exception of Mr. Burton, who voted in the negative.

His Excellency asked if he wished to divide, but Mr. Burton did not claim a division.

The Hon. the Acting Attorney-General moved the second reading of the Ordinance. Seconded by the Hon. the Receiver-General.

The Hon. James Murray said that he wished to say a few words before the Ordinance went further. It had come as a surprise to him, and he had gone into the matter very closely in the time at his disposal, and had made full inquiries. He regretted that such an Ordinance had to be brought forward. He held, and had always held, that it was the duty of every Englishman in this colony, surrounded as we are by half-civilised natives, to uphold the Government in power in this place, more especially as the Fijians were in a transition state, and, although they were advancing year by year, the bulk of them were still savages. He considered it was their duty to support the party in power, whether they agreed entirely or only in part with the present form of government or the details of the present system of government. They must admit that the object the Government had at heart was the betterment of the Fijian, and he would even go so far as to say that the prospects of the settlers had been overlooked in some small degree in order that the Fijians might be better attended to. During the last few years, in the present Governor's administration, more had been done towards bettering the condition of the native, both from a sanitary point and in general improvement, than during the whole of the previous years of the colony's existence. Holding these views, he supported the Bill, although he was not pleased with the wording, and would like to see it changed. Whilst he supported the Ordinance and hoped it would have the desired effect, he thought there were many ways of getting round it. He had seen many ways where disaffection might be carried to the Fijian without the emissaries of agitators being punished, because they would take care to keep out of the way themselves; and he instanced the Irish agitators and the measures adopted by them.

The Hon. W. Burton, in rising to oppose the Ordinance, said that, although there was a general feeling of loyalty to support the Government, he thought it was the privilege of an Englishman to discuss the acts of a Governor if done in a proper manner. The effect of the Bill in question would be to stop ordinary conversation on Government matters between the white man and the Fijian. No end of trouble would ensue, as it was so extremely difficult to restrict it. The Ordinance would prevent a Fijian, if he considered he had a grievance, from ever knowing whether he could obtain relief or appeal from it, as, if he consulted a European, the latter would be liable to six months' imprisonment. Another point they had to consider: It was questionable whether the Ordinance was needed. There were only a few people who had acted in the way suggested, and it was with no idea of disloyalty.

His Excellency: For their own ends.

Mr. Burton: Too much importance has been put on the actions of these men. If this great unrest did exist, it arose more from the action of the Government than from any suggestion as to the advantage to be gained by federation with New Zealand, or the election of representatives to this Council. There would be a constant controversy as to the interpretation of the Act. He