

1901.
NEW ZEALAND.

WAINIBOKASI HOSPITAL, FIJI.

(OPENING OF THE).

Laid on the Table of both Houses by Leave.

SPEECH DELIVERED BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR OF FIJI,
SIR G. O'BRIEN.

[Extract from *Fiji Times*, 31st October, 1900.]

ON Tuesday, the 23rd, His Excellency the Governor, accompanied by the Hon. Mr. and Mrs. Allardyce, the Hon. Mr. and Mrs. Sutherland, and Dr. and Mrs. Prior, proceeded by launch to Rewa for the purpose of opening the first of the new provincial hospitals which the Government is establishing in several of the outlying districts for the reception and treatment of Native patients.

The Governor and party reached the Hospital wharf at Wainibokasi a little after noon, where they were met by Dr. Withington and several other officials, and escorted to a large Native-built marquee which had been erected in the Hospital grounds, and where a number of Europeans and all the leading chiefs and people of the three provinces of Tailevu, Rewa, and Naitaisiri, including the Roko Tui Tailevu, Roko Tui Rewa, with their Bulis, numbering close on a thousand people, had assembled to witness the opening ceremony. Noticeable amongst the spectators were the Rev. Dr. Brown, the Rev. — Lane, and all the members of the Wesleyan Mission, and several of the priests from the Roman Catholic Mission-station at Rewa.

The weather was exceptionally fine, and everything bore quite a gala appearance, the Hospital buildings being decorated for the occasion with flags and festoons of flowers, and the grounds, which only very recently had been a wilderness of grass, had been cleared and laid out in food and flower gardens.

The opening proceedings—viz., the making of the “yaqona,” and the presentation of the bowl, of which His Excellency partook, with the usual accompaniment of native song—having been got through, the Governor addressed the assemblage in the following terms:—

Roko Tui Tailevu, Roko Tui Rewa, and you other chiefs and men of Rewa and the neighbouring provinces,—I am very glad to see you all assembled here to-day to witness the opening of the Wainibokasi Hospital.

2. The building of the Hospital and doctor's quarters has cost some £1,400, and Government has spared no expense in fitting it up and equipping it with everything necessary so that the sick in these provinces may here receive gratis the best possible medical treatment.

3. It is only lately that Government has had money at its disposal to try and improve the material condition of the Fijian people. Since it has had the money it has lost no time in spending it for the benefit of the Fijians. Other hospitals are being erected in other provinces, creeks are being bridged, and where the water-supply is bad a good supply is being laid on at the expense of the Government. You in Rewa have benefited by the Rewa water-supply; and in Tailevu also, and in other provinces, works are being undertaken to provide the people with wholesome water for drinking and cooking.

4. Talking of the Rewa water-supply, I may tell you what happened the other night in Suva at a meeting which was held in favour of federation with New Zealand—that is to say, in favour of giving over to New Zealand this country of Fiji, which the Fijians gave to Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria. Well, at this federation meeting mention was made of the Rewa water-supply. And what do you think was said about it? Why, it was said that it was absurd to supply you with water, and that it was very wrong to have spent the money that has been spent in doing so. It was said that all the villages that had been supplied lie on the banks of the Rewa, and that the Rewa water which was good enough for your forefathers was good enough for you. The Rewa water, by the way, as is usual in tidal rivers, is uncommonly brackish; but never mind about that. And the speaker also said that he was sure that every one at the meeting agreed with him that what he called the absurd Rewa water scheme was one on which it was very wrong to have spent money, and which never would have been carried out by any kind of Government except the Government which you now have. The people at the meeting did not contradict him, and I suppose that they