

question of giving more effective representation in the Council to the European residents; and that his attention will be drawn to the other points raised by Mr. Seddon, and in particular to the desirability of improving communications by opening up the lower reaches of the rivers, and by a more extended construction of roads and bridges.

3. Mr. Seddon will appreciate the fact that it is necessary to move cautiously in dealing with matters of such importance to the future of Fiji, but he may rest assured that his suggestions will receive full consideration both from Sir H. Jackson and from myself.

I have, &c.,

J. CHAMBERLAIN.

Governor the Right Hon. the Earl of Ranfurly, G.C.M.G., &c.

Enclosure.

SIR,—

Steamship "Tongariro," Teneriffe, 13th September, 1902.

The question of Fiji and the Pacific Islands not having been dealt with at the late Conference, I desire to call your attention to the decrease of the Fijian population, which the census returns give as being over one thousand a year for the last twenty years, and the late census returns show no improvement, but quite the reverse. The European population in the Fiji Islands is also less than it was twenty years ago. The islands are capable of great development, and whilst the Fijian will not work regularly, yet at certain employment, such as planting, fruit-growing, &c., which is intermittent, he, like the Maori, would do this provided the opportunity offered and his labours were fittingly requited. The spreading-out of the Maoris on new lands, and with due regard to water-supply and sanitation, has gone a long way to prevent their dying out, and they are now on the increase. The newly-appointed Governor of the islands will, no doubt, give this matter his attention, and do his best to arrest the dying-out of the Fijian race.

The New Zealand Parliament passed resolutions some time ago agreeing to the annexation of Fiji to New Zealand, and in reply thereto the Secretary of State for the Colonies stated that the Fijians, who had ceded the islands, should be consulted. How and in what way this was to be done has not been intimated to the New Zealand Government. Petitions have been largely signed by the Fijians; but what has become of the same we do not know. From the present outlook, however, it will be some time before this matter will be dealt with, and, pending a decision, and New Zealand being largely interested, I very respectfully urge that there should be some European and Native members elected to the Executive Council. This has worked well in other similarly situated islands, and would, I feel sure, relieve the strained situation in Fiji, besides being appreciated by both races.

I also consider it imperative that a loan should be authorised for the purpose of road-making, improving the beds of rivers for navigation, and water-supply. Experiments should also be made on a large scale in cotton-growing. This would find employment for the Natives and take the place of fruit-growing, which has of late years, owing to lessened markets, fallen off considerably; with the recent Commonwealth tariff on fruits, there will most likely be a still further falling-off. The export of copra could also be largely increased if extended planting obtained. At present the sugar-growing industry seems to be the Alpha and Omega of Fiji. It is not wise to have all the eggs in one basket, and should changes eventuate inimical to the sugar-growing industry Fiji would be in a very bad condition. Beet-growing in New Zealand, or a change in our tariff, withdrawing concessions now granted on raw sugar, would injuriously affect Fiji sugar-growing, and, seeing these are contingencies that may arise, it is well to further, especially in the interests of the Fijians, the other industries for which the islands are eminently adapted.

I have, &c.,

R. J. SEDDON.

No. 46.

(No. 97.)

MY LORD,—

Downing Street, 2nd October, 1902.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch (No. 69) of the 16th August, stating that you have received from all parts of the colony, from towns and country districts, from societies and associations, as well as from many Maori tribes, resolutions of congratulation and thankfulness that His Majesty the King should have so far recovered as to admit of his coronation.

2. I have to inform you that His Majesty deeply appreciated the good-will and loyalty thus manifested by his people of New Zealand, and commands me to request that these resolutions may be acknowledged, with an expression of his sincere thanks.

I have, &c.,

J. CHAMBERLAIN.

Governor the Right Hon. the Earl of Ranfurly, G.C.M.G., &c.