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"SIR ARTHUR HAMILTON GORDON - GOVERNOR OF NEW ZEALAND AND HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR THE WESTERN PACIFIC 1880–1882"

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Being part requirement for M.A. Degree 1963 at the University of Otago.
CONTENTS

Introduction p. 1

1. Sir Arthur Hamilton Gordon p. 4

2. The Appointment of Gordon to Fiji and the Foundation of the Western Pacific High Commission p. 7

3. The End of His Fiji Governorship p. 10

4. Gordon's Appointment to New Zealand p. 16

5. New Zealand, Fiji and Gordon 1880-1882 p. 24

6. Gordon and Des Voeux p. 34

7. Conclusion p. 33

Bibliography p. 36
INTRODUCTION

The post of Western Pacific High Commissioner established by the Order in Council of 17th August 1877 continued to exist until 1952, and, except for one short period (1880-82) it was held by the Governor of Fiji. During the period 1880-82 the post was held by the Governor of New Zealand, Sir Arthur Gordon who had previously been the first Governor of Fiji (1875-80) and the first Western Pacific High Commissioner.

This situation was obviously exceptional, and the question could well be asked, "why was Gordon permitted to keep the office of Commissioner when he was transferred to the Governorship of New Zealand, and what were the effects of this arrangement?" And it is this question which this essay attempts to answer.

In January 1874 Mr. Julius Vogel said in the New Zealand House of Representatives "I desire to see New Zealand become the Headquarters of the British possession in Polynesia. I think from its geographical position, from its climate, and from the character of its people it is not too
much to expect that it will arrive at that position and that the day is not too far distant when the Governor of New Zealand will be Governor-General of the Polynesian Islands owning British Sway.¹ However, at this time the chances of New Zealand gaining such a position in the near future, were more remote than Vogel cared to hope. New Zealand public opinion was more concerned with the internal problems of the States Forests Bill, and the future of Provincial Government. Little help could be expected from Britain in this design. The Imperial Government had no wish to increase its obligations in the Pacific more than absolutely necessary and only after much deliberation and delay Fiji was annexed.

Events caused a change in the British stand, however. The Labour traffic had to be controlled and British subjects in the Islands demanded legal protection against native outrages. For these reasons and because of the recommendations of the Goodenough-Layard report (10th. June 1874) and the influence of one Arthur Hamilton Gordon the Western

Pacific High Commission was eventually set up in 1877 in connection with the Governorship of Fiji. And it is imperative that the part of Gordon in the establishment of the Commission be examined in order that the implications of his keeping the post of Commissioner when he went to New Zealand, be fully understood.
1. ARTHUR HAMILTON GORDON

A study of the personality of Gordon goes far in explaining the situation which arose from 1875 to 1882 and he is best described by A. P. Maudsley who was his private secretary in Fiji. Sir Arthur Gordon was he said,¹ "short, dark, not good looking, careless of his appearance, short sighted. As a boy and a young man he was his father's greatest friend and companion and was his father's private secretary when he was Prime-Minister.² I believe his father went everywhere, never did anything without him. He was brought up at Haddo, the Scotch country seat (I believe an awfully dull place) and was never sent to school, but he took a degree at Cambridge. . . . . . as his father's secretary, he knew all the people of the day worth knowing, and knew as well as his father everything that was going on. He was Gladstone's Private Secretary when High Commissioner of the Ionian Isles and has always remained on intimate terms with him.

² Lord Aberdeen.
He was for a short time in Parliament, then Governor of New Brunswick, Trinidad, Mauritius and Fiji. Nowhere has he been popular, since he has a very bad manner with strangers and he is perfectly aware of it and regrets it much. He is very determined and puts aside all opposition when his mind is made up, but with people with whom he is in sympathy, though not agreeing, he is perfectly open to discussion and even diffident to subordinates. His personal staff have always been strongly attached to him; with them he is on perfectly easy terms and not in the least exacting. He is a high Churchman with strong religious opinions which he does not air. He professes to be a liberal but his aristocratic leanings come out insensibly. He is very proud of his family and descent. He is very large minded, and some things almost an enthusiast. Well read, particularly in history and in some curiously odd subjects. Very fond of nature and scenery, he has a very artistic appreciation of light and colour. Active, a good walker, utterly careless of what he eats and drinks — or rather, I don't believe he ever knows what he eats and drinks. Often very pre-occupied
when there are difficult matters to settle or schemes to devise, he has a dreadful habit of putting off all writing until the last minute".

As Mansel said, Gordon had close contact with many high government officials especially during his years as Private Secretary to his father and later to Gladstone. These contacts stood him "in good stead" in his Colonial career.

His friendship with the Gladstones was especially close, and they kept in continual correspondence. In fact, Gordon, before going to New Brunswick in 1861, confided to Mrs. Gladstone his love for her eldest daughter Agnes. However, Mrs. Gladstone gently informed him that the love was not reciprocated although Agnes regarded him as a close friend.¹ The marriage design failed but he remained on the closest of terms with the Gladstones; Mr. Gladstone helping Gordon as much as he could in his career.

2. THE APPOINTMENT OF GORDON TO FIJI AND THE FOUNDATION OF THE WESTERN PACIFIC HIGH COMMISSION

In 1869 Arthur Gordon gave up Parliamentary life and decided on a career in the Colonial Service. He was appointed successively as governor in New Brunswick (1861-66), Trinidad (1866-1870), and Mauritius (1870-74) before being appointed to Fiji. Apparently Gordon did not feel that this last appointment was an adequate return for his past services, and he only accepted Fiji on the condition he would have the post of Western Pacific High Commissioner attached to it. His wife wrote from Fiji in 1876. "He would never have accepted the Governorship except for that promise."¹

The evidence brought to light by W. D. MacIntyre's studies and in Gordon's private papers, show that Gordon used the strong feelings of the British Government on the need to stop the Labour traffic and to protect British subjects in the Pacific Islands, to further his aspirations to grandure. It was his ambition which would not permit him to take Fiji without the promise of the

post of High Commissioner of the Western Pacific.

The device of giving a Governor of a British
Colony authority in a wider region was not a new
one. The best example was the Governor of the
Cape who had been High Commissioner in South Africa
with "certain responsibilities beyond the frontier"
since 1854. But whose idea was the Western
Pacific High Commission and why, as McIntyre says,
was so grandiose a title of High Commissioner
attached to "fairly prosaic consular duties"?

"There is every probability that the suggestion
(that the Governor of Fiji should be consul to the
surrounding region) came from Sir Arthur Gordon,
who became the first High Commissioner"; for it
was the day that Gordon visited Sir Robert Herbert
that the permanent Under secretary of the Colonial
Office first recorded that suggestion. Two
months later a formal proposal was made to the

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1 W. D. McIntyre, "Disraeli's Colonial Policy and
the Creation of the Western Pacific High
Commission", Historical Studies, Vol. 9, No. 35,
P. 279.


3 6th, November 1874.
Colonial Office, that the post of Governor of Fiji should be united with that of Consul General of Samoa, Tonga, and the New Hebrides. Thus there is a strong case that the post was more than Gordon's suggestion and that it was his idea.

The irritation and frustration of Gordon, between 1875 and 1877, justifies this argument. On the 4th. of June 1875 he wrote to Carnarvon from Sydney "The non-issue of the High Commission places me in a rather ridiculous position". This period of annoyance ended on 13th. August 1877, however, after the deputation of Gordon through his private secretary Alfred Mandelay with announcement of the Order-in-Council creating the High Commission he had worked for. His goal was achieved, but towards the end of 1878, and all through 1879 a feeling of dissatisfaction with his post in Fiji is detectable in Gordon's correspondence. He wanted a change and with that change he wanted increased status. It was with these objects in mind that he worked for an Australasian Government in connection with Fiji and the High Commissioner-ship during 1879-80.

1 12th. January 1875.
2 Carnarvon Papers PRO 30/6/39, p.75 - quoted by McIntyre.
3. **THE END OF HIS FIJI GOVERNORSHIP**

The Secretary of State Lord Carnarvon was the first to suggest the strange situation which resulted from 1880 to 1882. He suggested that Gordon should move to a region of more favourable climate and hold Fiji in plurality with some Australasian governorship, spending part of each year in Fiji. The idea lapsed with the resignation of Carnarvon as Secretary of State for the Colonies in 1878, although it is obvious from Gordon's letters home, that he had not forgotten it. While he was on leave in England, he seriously explored the possibility of his having a dutal governorship. This is evidenced in his lengthy letter to his close friend Lord Selbourne, of 24 April 1880, in which he put his case.

1. "Early next year my term of office as Governor here will expire after which I shall have no reason to complain if I am at any moment relieved by the appointment of a successor."

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2. "My work is not yet firmly established... and I should therefore regret my removal.

3. "On the other hand I am unwilling that my children should live longer in this climate or that I should live apart from them.

4. "Therefore what I should best like would be to receive one of the great Australasian governments without giving up this, an arrangement perfectly workable."

Gordon then went on to say that if this were impossible, he would have no wish for any other government, although he would not refuse another "suitable employment".

He continued "The last thing I should think of doing would be to seek to establish any claim to notice on political grounds, but I may tell you that I have it on the excellent authority of Abercorn for saying but for the change of front of Aberdeen and Alex, which took place at that time, I should have Sydney Fiji which he had asked for me... and Abercorn was told very plainly that I could expect nothing until there was an improvement in the politics of the family".
Gordon wrote that he had not told Gladstone of this, but that he hoped that he (Selbourne), and Sir Michael Hicks-Beach might be able to help him.¹

A letter to Lady Gordon from Nasova dated 28 April 1880, gives a clearer picture of his aspirations. "I suppose Gladstone would certainly wish to do something for me. What I should like would be to retain this Government with that of New Zealand, New South Wales, or Victoria so I could continue to watch over Fiji while where you could be comfortable and the children healthy. But remember that without Fiji tacked onto it I would not accept an Australasian government or any self governing Colony except Canada."²

Gordon saw the plan as quite feasible; indeed had not Sir Hercules Robinson been Governor of New South Wales whilst at the same time Governor of Fiji.³

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¹ Lord Stanmore, "Fiji Records of Private and Public Life", Vol. IV, p.278.
³ However his real ambitions were as he revealed to his wife "as yet equally unattainable. The one is Governor-General of India; the other is that of Professor of Modern History in the University of Cambridge. I dont know what would please me most".
What he wanted was two separate governments under the one Governor and High-Commissioner (himself). This arrangement would allow him to supervise those matters in Fiji which he felt were only half-completed while being relatively free from all but general policy matters in "his" Australasian government. And to gain this object Gordon used all pressure he could through his friends Gladstone, Lord Selbourne, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, and Abercorn.

While this arrangement seemed perfectly workable to Sir Arthur Gordon, he soon came to fear what Lord Kimberley, for whom he had a personal dislike, would not agree to it. And he became extremely depressed about the chances of gaining the fulfillment of his wish, because Kimberley did not approve of the "politics of his family". He particularly feared being replaced prematurely by some politically suitable Colonial Office hack and having the results of his work "being kicked down like a pack of cards".¹ He pessimistically observed that he would be simply relieved and be perhaps offered Queensland or South Australia, which he said he would decline.

¹ Lord Stanmore, "Fiji", Vol. IV, p.305.
At this stage Gordon seemed to lose faith in the possibility of influencing Kimberley, whom he believed was jealous of this intimate relationship with Gladstone. He summed up, in his diary description of Kimberley saying, "he is just the sort of man not to do a thing all the more because he is asked to do it".¹

Stoically he wrote to his wife on 5 June 1880 "The future is in God's hands. If he means to bless my efforts with these people, it will be done, though I leave them. If not, it is infinite wisdom that has determined otherwise."² The lack of faith Gordon had in the future seems to reflect the lack of confidence he had in his contacts in England (which was not unjustified), but up until early June he had not made any formal application for a joint governorship including Fiji.

It was not until 15 June 1880 that Gordon wrote formally to Lord Kimberley requesting an Australasian colony without relinquishing his Fiji appointment

¹ Lord Stanmore, "Fiji", Vol. IV, p.316.
stating that his administration was "not altogether unsuccessful" only that his work was unfinished and that he would therefore like to have remained there longer but for his wife and children. He then modestly went on to say a dual governorship would have the dual advantage of economy and his experience.¹ A few days later he sent a letter to Lady Gordon asking her to try and use her influence in the Colonial Office, and suggested that Sir Hercules Robinson be sent to Madras and himself to New Zealand.² New Zealand at this stage was attractive to Gordon; as long as Fiji was attached.

4. **Gordon’s Appointment to New Zealand**

On 7 August 1880 it was announced in London "that Sir Arthur Gordon, Governor of Fiji has been appointed Governor of New Zealand". The news of his appointment worried Gordon. Was he to be allowed his request to keep the Governorship of Fiji? The High Commissionership was probably included in Gordon’s wish but was not one of his stated requests.

In this situation he used a similar ploy to the time when he wanted the High-Commissionership in conjunction with Fiji in 1875. He wrote to his wife: "I either go to New Zealand if I keep this government too or I at once go home if relieved here", but soberly added "I confess the serving of one's time to qualify for a pension of a £7,000 a year salary are inducements, though vulgar ones to go to New Zealand".

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1 *Otago Daily Times*, 9 August 1880.


Several days later Gordon received news that Mr. Des Voeux, who had been Acting-Governor of Fiji during his leave, was to be the Governor of Fiji succeeding himself. Gordon was very disappointed with this decision for he regarded Des Voeux as "not at all a fit man to succeed me", and in his letter to Lord Selbourne two days later he said; "I am greatly mortified by my premature replacement here by a very inefficient man". Two separate governorships, he said, would complicate administration whereas one would be for the better. He finished the letter with the air of one who felt they were indispensable, predicting a revolt in Fiji within three or four years if he were relieved.

Realizing that he had been appointed to New Zealand for good or for bad, Gordon now concentrated on retaining as much power as possible over Fiji, refusing to accept the decision that Des Voeux was to be his successor as final. Writing to his wife on the 14 September he suggested that Sir A. Strahan

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1 Announced in London on 12 August 1880, Otago Daily Times, 14 August 1880. This decision replaced the decision to appoint Des Voeux to the Governorship of the Bahamas made on 13 July 1880.

of Tasmania replace Sir A. Kennedy who had given up Queensland, and Des Voeux going to Tasmania (which he had always wanted) leaving an administration in Fiji directly responsible to himself. He saw that there could only be purely official objections to this and said, "I could guarantee its perfectly easy working and after my time the junction (a merely personal one through the governor) might cease". This letter shows that Gordon obviously thought himself a special case requiring particular attention. He was irrepressibly egocentric.

In late September Gordon received a dispatch from Lord Kimberley: "I hope your appointment to New Zealand will have been acceptable to you... I was informed that New Zealand combined with the High Commissionership would meet your wishes... I have recommended Mr. Des Voeux for Governor of Fiji and have explained to him that you will exercise general superintendence over Fiji native affairs...".²

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2 Ibid, p.466, Herbert to Gordon, August 15.
Sir Robert Herbert wrote "I imagine you would have preferred New South Wales to New Zealand and continued as Governor of Fiji with a Lieutenant Governor under your orders, but Lord Kimberley decided that it would not be well to place Fiji directly under any one of the Australasian colonies". But no reasons were given for this decision.

This decision was most annoying to Gordon who saw the Government had "hit on a wholly unworkable arrangement" and immediately sent home telegrams asking for a clarification of his general powers of superintendence in Fiji. He felt at this time, if he did not receive an answer satisfactory to him, he would return home although hating to leave his work in Fiji only half-finished.

The position moreover, was very confusing for Gordon who was at a loss to see why an Australasian Colony without Fiji should be an "acceptable

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1 Later Selbourne wrote to Gordon saying, Gladstone, Gordon's hope felt that the two governments should not be held by the same person and he recommended Des Voeux because he was a close friend of Gordon. This was the nearest approach to Gordon's desires that could be obtained. Lord Stanmore, "Fiji", Vol. IV, p.443.

appointment"\(^1\) when he had so often explained that it was only his keeping Fiji which would induce him to take up one of the Australasian Governorships. His annoyance and depression were such, that any excuse that he could use (if given no power over Fiji) would have been good enough to return directly to England.

Gordon thanked Kimberley for his position, in his dispatch of 11 October 1883, but wrote with obvious dissatisfaction; "your letter is nearly as oracular as your telegram I confess I do not see how Fiji native affairs can be separated from other Fiji business, nor do I find it easy to understand a general superintendence unless with some degree of authority. I greatly fear that any such arrangement will prove to be unsatisfactory in its working. But as I have actually been appointed, I shall consider it my duty to proceed to Wellington...\(^2\)

Gordon's feelings against this limited jurisdiction of his Governorship were somewhat modified when in late

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2 Ibid, p.466, Gordon to Kimberley.
October he received telegrams from the Colonial Office informing him that he would "retain substantial authority over Fiji". The powers included in this "substantial authority" were the Presidency of the Native Council and control over land claims. This being so, he decided to "at least go to Auckland" although he could not see how the dual control would ever work out in practice.

But now Gordon contradicted his case for having a governorship over the two Colonies by pointing out to Lord Kimberley in his dispatch of 18 December that it would not be possible to exercise full control over Fiji while he was in New Zealand for most of the year. This point had been completely overlooked, or ignored by Gordon during his earlier manoeuvrings but after his rebuff it was used as an excuse for not having a duality of offices at all.

Thus it seems the reason why Gordon was not given his wish, although, he had such strong and influential friends was because of Kimberley's

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personal dislike of Gordon and of his family "politics". But there is also another factor; the ambition of Des Voeux.

Apparently Des Voeux was offered the post of Undersecretary to Gordon in Fiji by the Colonial Office. He refused this offer and feared he had made a bad impression on those at the Office. He was therefore most surprised to receive a letter one hour later from Lord Kimberley, raising his salary and giving him the post of full Governor.\(^1\)

The quick decision can only indicate that Kimberley did not really want Gordon holding a dual commission from the beginning, and Des Voeux' refusal to accept finally led him to make the decision he wished but had hesitated in taking because of the pressure of Gordon's friends.

Gordon's dislike for his New Zealand appointment without Fiji attached was obvious from the beginning. On his appointment he wrote in his journal "Many of my brother Governors are no doubt envying me and commenting on my luck in escaping these islands..."

How little they suspect the truth. I detest Colonial Civilization and I infinitely prefer the vigorous real life of action to the conventional platitudes and wearisome profitless conventionalities of Colonial society and life. I should do so even were the Governor a power in New Zealand instead of a puppet — a leaden seal... How I detested the thought of my hated promotion. 

The position would therefore have been little different if he had gained New South Wales instead of New Zealand. But it is arguable that he would not have been so bitter about his appointment if he had been permitted to keep Fiji, and that the most important reason for his bitterness was the frustration of his hope. Even the concessions of retaining "substantial powers" over Fiji and the High Commissionership did not modify this bitterness. Subsequently, during his appointment as Governor of New Zealand, this frustration became increasingly obvious and he constantly looked to his responsibilities in Fiji for relief from "that detestable Government".

The news of Gordon's appointment as Governor General reached New Zealand in early August. It was generally well received but more noticeably in the North, for it was hoped that he would retain the High Commissionership, and that the resulting connection of New Zealand with Fiji and the Western Pacific would benefit Auckland trade. Hope was also expressed that the British Government would unite the post of High-Commissioner with that of the Commander of the Pacific Naval Station (to the benefit of Auckland) for a more unified British administration in the Pacific. But doubts were expressed about the dual post because the distance from the Islands to New Zealand would hinder efficient administration. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach clarified the issue in a policy declaration, saying that the joint post of Naval Officer and High Commissioner was not advisable, secondly that Sir Arthur Gordon was to have supervision of certain Fiji questions chiefly connected with native affairs and land titles "of which subjects he had exceptional experience" and thirdly that Gordon was to remain the High Commissioner and discharge his duties from...
New Zealand.¹

One month later the Colonial Office announced that Mr. Des Voeux would be principal Deputy High-Commissioner to Gordon. This arrangement was lauded by the *New Zealand Herald* in its leader of 12 October 1880. The appointment was seen as recognition (at last) of the colony's commanding geographic position for the task, and the paper observed that New Zealand's trade relations with Fiji must also have been a factor in the Colonial Office decision. One doubt however was raised by the editor. This was the lack of precision in the explanation of Gordon's duties in Fiji.² And during the course of his Governorship, New Zealanders became more and more irritated by this vagueness which allowed Gordon to absent himself from New Zealand on the smallest of pretexts.

Gordon arrived in New Zealand on 23 November 1880. There were great celebrations in both Auckland and Wellington to mark his arrival and

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¹ "New Zealand Herald", 27 August 1880.
² Ibid, 12 October 1880.
the "Otago Daily Times" printed a photogravure portrait supplement of the new Governor to mark the occasion.

His government gave little cause for criticism until September 1881 when he resolved to visit Fiji to discharge his duties as High Commissioner. The constitutionality of the Governor's planned departure from the Colony was questioned in Parliament\(^1\) and the *New Zealand Herald* demanded why the visit was so urgent that it should have to take place during the Parliamentary session. Indeed the paper questioned how the dual appointment had ever eventuated.\(^2\) (A great change of opinion from the praise for the arrangement a year before.)

By the end of October it was evident to many New Zealanders that "a difference of opinion exists between the Governor and his responsible advisers touching the native policy of the latter".\(^3\)

Thus there were not one but two points of conflict between the Governor and the Ministry.

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1 N.Z. A. to J., Vol. 1, 1882, A4, No. 4.
2 N.Z. Herald, 10 September 1881.
3 Otago Daily Times, 22 October 1881.
Adverse comment increased with Gordon's prolonged absence from New Zealand. On 14 October the "Southern Cross" stated "Sir Arthur Gordon has been busying himself with affairs with which his services are... (not) desired". This feeling against Gordon is also evident in the Fiji letter in the New Zealand Herald 22 October. "Sir A. Gordon will remain in Fiji for several weeks as there is a good deal of business to be transacted in connection with his office as High Commissioner... the tone of the New Zealand Press indicates that it is under this false impression, that they have tried to reconcile themselves to the absence of the Governor, to whose undivided service they are distinctly entitled. What will be said in the Colony when it is known that the High Commission business is a mere subterfuge. That there are virtually no High Commission affairs to attend to, except such as may be created... How will they appreciate that the colony of Fiji is as thoroughly unconnected with High Commission Jurisdiction or affairs as is the colony of New Zealand save and

1 Otago Daily Times, 22 October 1881.
2 N.Z. Herald, 22 October 1881.
except that the machinery of the Supreme Court here is utilized for carrying out the systems of a matter which requires either the transfer of the court to New Zealand or the severance of all connection between the High Commissioner and the Governor of that Colony." The question how will New Zealanders feel when they realize New Zealand is playing second fiddle to Fiji, is then posed.¹

New Zealanders too began to criticise the dual commission. The Otago Daily Times 26 October said in its Editorial "the combination of the office of Governor of New Zealand with that of High Commissioner for the Western Pacific has not resulted happily... Sir Arthur Gordon is in a peculiarly unfortunate position. He is like the boy in the fable, who trying to grasp more nuts than his hand could hold, ended by dropping them all. Sir Arthur Gordon is in the way in the West Pacific so he is in New Zealand. We could spare him without a pang".

The "Times" then criticised his support of Te Whiti and continued "we confess we are sincerely

¹ The New Zealand Herald, 22 October 1881.
sorry to see Sir Arthur Gordon make such astounding blunders. He has so many very noble qualities. He is a high spirited, courageous, magnanimous gentleman and he is as true as steel. If only he had an ordinary share of judgement, a moderate limit of ambition, and some sort of sympathy with those of his countrymen whom he is called upon to govern, he would be a valuable servant of the crown. ¹

The ministerial crisis of April 1882 again gave the colonists grounds for criticism of Gordon. His apparent choice of Grey to succeed Hall was attacked by the press and public alike. It was felt Gordon was abusing his prerogative to gain a government which would reverse the Hall native policy and the Wellington correspondent of the Otago Daily Times reported; "Public feeling still runs very high here on the conduct of the Governor, and people seem quite panic stricken at the prospect of another period of Grey-ite misrule."² Even the rejection of Grey for Whitaker did not redeem Gordon. The public who now seemed to criticise his every move, regarded this delayed choice as sign of weakness and vacillation.

¹ The Otago Daily Times, 26 October 1881.
² Ibid, 15 April, 1882.
Further, the Governor's Report to the Colonial Office on West Coast Native Affairs, presented to Parliament for approval on 13 June was criticised as an interference into an Internal matter over which the Imperial Government had no jurisdiction.¹

The relations between the Governor and the Colony had become extremely cool and by mid 1882 Parliament and the Governor worked together only under much strain. New Zealanders were not sorry when Sir Arthur Gordon left the colony on 23 June 1882 aboard H.M.S. Miranda. The departure was "of the coldest and tamest character possible and the utter absence of anything like cordiality was very noticeable".²

And in its Editorial of 27 June the Otago Daily Times noted "from first to last Sir Arthur has been unpopular here, and his appointment was one of the greatest mistakes ever committed by the Colonial Office".³

¹ The Otago Daily Times, 17 June 1882.
² Ibid, 24 June, 1882.
³ Ibid, 27 June, 1882.
6. GORDON AND DES VOEUX

It was inevitable in such a situation that these two men, both strong willed should come into conflict. In fact Des Voeux foresaw this friction and would rather have accepted his previous appointment to the Bahamas than Fiji. 1

From their meeting in Auckland in November 1880, friction and tension were evident. 2 Des Voeux was determined to make the most of his new promotion and Gordon felt annoyed because he was not told of his precise relations with Des Voeux until their meeting.

Des Voeux was opposed to Gordon's dual position for several reasons. 3 He saw that the posting of the High Commissioner in New Zealand as a curse because of the additional correspondence which would be necessary, and because of the time factor, he would not always be able to satisfy Gordon's wishes.

Secondly, with the papers of the land claimants kept by Gordon in New Zealand there would be a resultant

2 Ibid, pp. 16-17.
irritation of claimants because of delays. Finally, Des Voeux was annoyed by the self appointment of Gordon as a senior member of his Executive council. This was a most embarrassing situation for Des Voeux, who saw that his government was being controlled, at least in part, from New Zealand and this was not to the Colony's advantage.

On the other hand Gordon would not overcome his annoyance at being replaced in Fiji by "a very inefficient man", and the determination of Des Voeux to administer Fiji in his own way, although following the example set by him from 1875-80 must have irritated him further.

The unworkability of this dual commission became more and more obvious during Gordon's Governorship in New Zealand. This feeling was obvious in both Fiji and in New Zealand. There was therefore a feeling of relief when he left for England six months before his commission expired.
7. CONCLUSION

Sir Arthur Gordon had thus manoeuvred himself into a most frustrating position. His hope of a dual governorship was not granted. He had hoped for too much, relying too much upon his friends at home who, in the final instance, were not strong enough to really influence Lord Kimberley's decision.

He had not wanted the system of duality which was decided upon. He had wanted the appointment of himself as a supreme governor above the deputy Governor of Fiji, in the same way as he would be above the resident Commissioner in Samoa. This was degrading for the Governor of Fiji, and it is little wonder that the arrangement was rejected by Des Voeux. But what of New Zealand? Gordon never clarified his ideal of government for any Australasian Government he should obtain. It seems that he planned to be full Governor rather than to have the more practical proposition of a deputy Governor under him, which would have given him freedom to govern the region in general policy terms and to visit the areas under his governance without the constitutional wrangling
which arose in New Zealand in 1881-82. Gordon's ideal however, was not to be, and the compromise of duality was devised, principally because of Kimberley's dislike for Gordon, and secondly, because of Des Voeux refusal to accept the deputy-Governorship of Fiji under Gordon in New Zealand.

The idea of a South-Pacific "Vice-roy" was very fanciful and attractive to New Zealanders, but the way in which the limited system failed under Gordon gave an indication of the difficulties which would have been encountered if his wish was granted.

Once his idea was rejected, Gordon became very depressed about the whole issue and for a time, any excuse would have served to enable him to return to England. However, the compromise "forced his hand", and he had to accept the situation as it was offered.

By June 1882 he had decided, as he had feared in 1880, that the system was impracticable. He then shirked his final six months of Governorship and quietly returned to England much to the indignation of the New Zealanders for he drew half-pay during his absence until his commission expired. But everyone was pleased that the duality then resolved into the pre-1880 situation for the dormant commissions.
came into force and Sir James Prendergast became acting Governor in New Zealand and Des Voeux became High Commissioner in addition to regaining full powers in Fiji. The latter situation would have been vastly more practical from the beginning, but instead we have the case of a man, influential in Imperial Government circles, attempting to use this influence to gain his own partially thought out dream, and bring fame to himself.

Perhaps if the system had been more painstakingly worked out by Gordon, this attempt at South-Pacific federation might have succeeded and the compromise system would not have been adopted so readily. But this does not take into account the men who opposed Gordon; notably Kimberley and Des Voeux.

Thus the dream of Sir Arthur Hamilton Gordon was not fulfilled and, in spite of his earlier sense of duty, we find him returning to England, a very disappointed man; refusing to stay the remaining six months of his commission in the Pacific.

One and a half years in the "hated promotion" were more than enough.
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