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For His Excellency's Decision.

The Phoenix Islands and the Closed District Ordinance.

- (a) The 152 inhabitants of Sydney Island are all Protestant adherents of the London Missionary Society and at a recent meeting of the island they unanimously petitioned His Excellency to extend the provisions of the Closed District Ordinance to Sydney Island, in the same manner as it has been applied to Arorae and Tamana Islands.
- (b) It is realized that it is difficult to justify the Closed District Ordinance from a theoretical point of view but, having recently spent three months on Tamana Island, I am strongly in favour of spreading the very real benefits afforded by this law wherever possible. The contrast between a happy and contented community such as exists on Tamana, where every one is a friendly neighbour and all unite in advancing the common prosperity and well-being, and the usual Gilbert Island, such as Tabiteuea, torn by sectarian strife from top to bottom, with family divided against family and father against son, is so marked that I would urge that no theoretical considerations should be allowed to prevent the government acceding to the unanimous wish of the natives. The attitude of the present Roman Catholic Bishop makes it even more important to extend this legislation, which will bring unity and happiness to an entire community.
- (c) I would recommend that the provisions of the Ordinance should also be extended to Gardner Island, where there is only one Catholic family out of seventeen. It is unlikely that any further Catholics will, in any case, be sent to that island.
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