

assent, no decision has yet been come to by the Colonial Office. I have, however, some reason for thinking, that if the Convention were to approve of a principle like the one of that Bill, and propose a measure by which the united Governments of Australasia should be at liberty to do what the Bill proposes in the case of New Zealand, there would not be much difficulty in obtaining the assent of the Imperial Government to it.

I take this opportunity of transmitting herewith, copy of a letter which was addressed by the Agent-General of Victoria to his Government, on the 30th November, containing a clear account of the interview with Lord Derby.

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

I have, &c.

F. D. BELL.

Enclosure 1.

PREMIER, New Zealand, Sydney.

Pacific Islands. Following statement French claims published in *Journal Officiel*. Western Pacific—Caledonia, Loyalty, Pines. Eastern Pacific—Firstly, Marquesas, eleven islands; secondly, Society's, Tahiti, and Moorea; thirdly, Low Archipelago, eighty islands; fourthly, in Australs, Tubuai and Vivitao, French, two others independent; fifthly, Rapa Island. All these claimed as dependencies of Tahiti, formerly under protectorate, now united to France by law 1880. Sixthly, Leeward Islands, near Tahiti, independent by declaration, France and England, but French flag flying, Raiatea, since 1880.

BELL.

London, December 3.

Enclosure 2.

AGENT-GENERAL for NEW SOUTH WALES, London.

Press telegrams assert French Chamber likely pass *Récidiviste* Bill. France asserts farther claims in Pacific: Agents-General protesting. Convention deems important that, while sitting, every changing phase be instantly wired by agents for consideration, and Convention's voice heard.

STUART.

Sydney, December 4.

Enclosure 3.

PRESIDENT, Intercolonial Convention, Sydney.—

Agents-General acting in concert. Any fact or changing phase will be wired by me on behalf of all. *Récidiviste* Bill still before Committee of Senate. Nothing to add to Victorian Agent's telegrams; but think Convention should consider whether not advisable ask Lords Derby, Granville, permission Agents see French Ministry direct, to explain attitude colonies, before Bill reaches further stage. Full statement French claims cabled by Bell yesterday. We are making every exertion impress Imperial Government gravity of position.

SAUL SAMUEL.

London, December 4.

Enclosure 4.

AGENT-GENERAL for NEW SOUTH WALES, London.—

Convention recognizes British Government only official channel communication with France.

STUART.

Sydney, December 5.

Enclosure 5.

SIR,—

8, Victoria Chambers, Westminster, S.W. 30th November, 1883.

In continuation of my letter of the 16th instant (No. 2,747), I have the honour to inform you that the meeting, referred to in its concluding paragraph, was held at this office on that evening, and was attended by the Agents-General for South Australia, New South Wales, New Zealand, and Queensland. After an interchange of views, which showed that we were in good general accord, it was decided that we should request the Secretary of State to grant us an interview, and I was asked to communicate with him on the subject. I enclose a copy of my letter to Lord Derby, and of his Private Secretary's reply.

II. We accordingly attended at the Colonial Office on the afternoon of the 23rd instant. At the desire of my colleagues, I first addressed his Lordship, and expressed to him—following, as nearly as possible, the terms of your late despatch, and having regard to the approaching Convention at Sydney—the natural desire of your Government, and of the colonies in general, to know on what terms Confederation, with the accompanying assumption of Her Majesty's obligations in regard to neighbouring native races, whether by protectorate or annexation, would be sanctioned and supported by the Imperial Government. I assumed, and throughout the course of the interview it was assumed, that, for the present at least, Confederation would probably amount to a common union in the form of dominion for the purposes of mutual defence, the protectorate of such Australasian islands as it might be considered advisable by the assembled Governments to include within the boundaries of the dominion, and, perhaps, such further purposes as a postal union.

III. As I have already informed you, in my telegraphic despatch of the following day, Lord Derby's language was, throughout the interview, exceedingly guarded; but on this point he said