

No. 38.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the PREMIER.

SIR,—

7, Westminster Chambers, London, S.W., 25th October, 1884.

In my letter of yesterday, No. 465, I took the liberty of expressing my own concurrence in the policy upon the Pacific question which you had laid down for my guidance in your telegram of the 23rd instant. I ought not, however, to have omitted a warning at the same time that such a policy was one that would of necessity encounter opposition from one or more of the Australian Governments, and that any success in it must be exceptionally hard to achieve.

This morning Mr. Murray-Smith acquainted me verbally with the tenor of Mr. Service's reply to the joint telegram which the Agents-General had sent to him on the 21st instant; and that tenor is precisely what I had expected it would be. Mr. Service says that New South Wales, Queensland, and South Australia accept the protectorate over New Guinea as proclaimed, and desire no further representations to be made, even (as I understand) on the *récidiviste* question, to Her Majesty's Government; while Victoria and New Zealand are not so satisfied, and wish both the questions of the Islands and the *récidivistes* to be still pressed upon Lord Derby.

The concert which has hitherto existed between the Agents-General is therefore sharply cut; and my impression is that as soon as we meet to discuss the position we shall be obliged to give up altogether the proposed interview with Lord Derby, which I had already begun to think would now be of no use.

If this were all, it would, no doubt, be immaterial, because, even if three of the colonies were satisfied about New Guinea, there need be nothing to prevent the other two from continuing to urge their own views about other islands and the convict question. But presently there will be a wider divergence between Victoria and New Zealand on another subject than there is between them and the rest of the group on these: Victoria will certainly continue to press strongly for the passing of the Enabling Bill, a measure which must give to the colonies of the Australian continent the preponderance of power over the whole future of the Pacific; whereas New Zealand, if I rightly understand your telegram of the 23rd, following the policy of Sir George Grey's Confederation Bill of last year, seeks to fulfil her own destiny by a federation of the Islands in which she must herself be one day the dominant power. This divergence is alone a formidable difficulty; but, in addition to it, a separate policy on the part of New Zealand will have to encounter many other obstacles, arising not so much from your own intercolonial relations or your relations to the Imperial Government as from the international relations of England herself with Germany and France.

In the meanwhile the immediate question before the Agents-General is whether they can go on working together at all; and here the first point I have to make sure of is whether I am to take the intimation contained in your telegram of the 23rd (that it was for my "private guidance") as prohibiting me from communicating your views to the other Agents-General. I have accordingly sent you a telegram to-day in which I have taken the liberty of advising you to let me communicate your views to them, not only because (as I told you in my letter of the 22nd instant, No. 461) it has always been a point of honour with the Agents-General to have no concealments among themselves, but because the Colonial Office would certainly not hold any communication with me which had to be kept secret from the other colonies, and therefore whatever I said on the part of New Zealand must in any case transpire very soon.

Copy of my telegram is annexed.
The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

I have, &c.,
F. D. BELL.

See No. 87.

No. 39.

The PREMIER to the AGENT-GENERAL.

PACIFIC.—Acquaint Agents-General.
27th October, 1884.

ROBERT STOUT.

No. 40.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the PREMIER.

GUINEA.—Telegram gone from Colonial Office to Governor Loftus, proposing that contributing colonies should appoint Council of Advice Scratchley; also suggesting purchase steamer, cost £18,000; and asking whether colonies will double contribution.

31st October, 1884.

F. D. BELL.

No. 41.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the PREMIER.

SIR,—

7, Westminster Chambers, London, S.W., 1st November, 1884.

I transmit to you herewith copy of a letter I have received from the Colonial Office, containing copy of a telegram sent by Lord Derby to the Governor of New South Wales respecting the New Guinea protectorate. On receiving that letter I sent you a telegram, of which copy is also annexed.

I am very anxiously waiting to know what Parliament has decided respecting any contribution on the part of New Zealand to the cost of the protectorate, as until this information reaches me it is impossible for me to advance a step at the Colonial Office on any question relating to the Pacific Islands.

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

I have, &c.,
F. D. BELL.