

No. 14.

The PREMIER, New Zealand, to the PREMIER, Victoria.

AGENT-GENERAL positively instructed immediately co-operate vigorously heartily with your Agent-General.

3rd October, 1884.

ROBERT STOUT.

No. 15.

The PREMIER, Victoria, to the PREMIER, New Zealand.

HEARTY thanks for your cordial co-operation. It is a thousand pities Sydney is not with us, the future is so wrapped up in the present. Have you communicated with Stuart? If Sydney won't act, the more reason for the other colonies closing their ranks firmly.

Melbourne, 3rd October, 1884.

JAMES SERVICE.

No. 16.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the PREMIER.

PACIFIC ISLANDS.—Am utterly unable imagine cause for message such peremptory terms. Victoria Agent-General and myself have throughout acted perfect concert, and had already devised course, supposing Sydney still refused join.

3rd October, 1884.

F. D. BELL.

No. 17.

The PREMIER to the AGENT-GENERAL.

PLEASED acting with Victorian Agent-General. Induced sent positive telegram through Premier Victoria representing Melbourne newspapers stated declined act without Samuel.

4th October, 1884.

ROBERT STOUT.

No. 18.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the PREMIER.

ALL right.

4th October, 1884.

F. D. BELL.

No. 19.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the PREMIER.

SIR,—

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

I received on the 26th September your telegram instructing me to co-operate zealously with the other Agents-General in order to induce the Imperial Government to establish speedily the promised protectorate over New Guinea, and to induce them, if possible, to include in it the other Pacific Islands; also stating that you concurred with Mr. Service in the expediency of making a renewed representation direct to Her Majesty's Ministers. I replied at once that the position on this side was one requiring the greatest care, because Mr. Stuart had, only two days before, telegraphed to Sir S. Samuel not to press the Government at all; and I advised you to urge Mr. Stuart not to break the concert that existed between all the Agents-General. A few days afterwards, having meanwhile had repeated consultations with Sir Saul Samuel and Mr. Murray-Smith, I again telegraphed to you that before the Agents-General could all act in concert, it was necessary I should be able to tell them whether I was to co-operate with Victoria on the question of federation as well as the protectorate, and also whether New Zealand would pay her quota of the £15,000; since obviously she could not press Lord Derby to take action if she did not share in that contribution. You replied that, while I might, if necessity arose, say that the question of the Federal Council Bill was still undecided, Parliament would be asked to grant the contribution; but you further directed me "immediately to co-operate heartily and vigorously with the Agent-General of Victoria." Being at a loss to imagine what could have caused an order to be sent to me in so peremptory a tone, I replied that Mr. Murray-Smith and I had been acting together throughout in perfect concert, and had, in fact, already decided upon the course we ought to take if New South Wales finally refused to act with us. You were thereupon considerate enough to explain that you had sent me so positive a message because the Prime Minister of Victoria had told you of Press telegrams having appeared in the Melbourne papers that I had refused to do anything without Sir Saul Samuel.

Copies of all these messages between us are, for convenience of reference, enclosed herewith. See Nos. 13,

I ascertained at once that the telegrams to which Mr. Service referred had not been sent to the *Argus*, but to the *Age*; and I have taken good care that my name is not used in that way again. It may, however, be as well to put on record what really happened, because I still think the position is one requiring great caution, and one which cannot be made to depend on any silly story that a reporter may choose to telegraph to Australia.

When the great step of the Convention had been taken, and Australasia seemed for a moment to be united, all the Agents-General had hoped that they too might be allowed to speak with one voice here. It is true that as to federation I was not myself an enthusiast, because I had all my life believed that New Zealand's destiny in relation to the Pacific Islands was a higher one than Australia's, and our interests there not entirely the same as hers. But it was for the Government,