

and not the Agent-General, to determine the policy of New Zealand; and when all the colonies had spoken, it was my duty to give that policy the utmost help I could. But hardly had the Convention separated before the inextinguishable feuds of Victoria and New South Wales broke out afresh; nor were there wanting here those who, animated above all things by a hatred of any new responsibilities in the Pacific, perceived to what advantage these feuds could be turned by adding them to the many other influences which made for procrastination and delay. A crowd of troubles were happening simultaneously in every part of the world. The *récidiviste* question alone was threatening serious complications with France, averted only by the consummate tact with which Lord Lyons has brought it to its present stage. Everywhere events seemed as adverse to a protectorate as to an annexation. The single point on which Lord Derby was entirely with us was resistance to the crime of flooding the Pacific with the malefactors of France. At last, on the 25th of April, I had a long interview with Lord Derby, who had sent for me on another matter, and I entreated him not to wait for the acceptance of the Convention resolutions by the Colonial Parliaments, but to decide at once what he would do about the Islands. On the 9th of May he sent out his circular despatch offering the protectorate if Australasia would give the £15,000. As soon as that despatch was received in the colonies, the Agents-General were directed to ascertain the real intentions of Her Majesty's Ministers. We answered to our Governments that unless Lord Derby's offer were closed with at once there would be serious danger of a collapse. Armed with power to promise the money, we met Lord Derby on the 2nd July; and once more I was asked by my colleagues to open the discussion. No sooner did we tell Lord Derby that he might have the money than we found that, so far from an extension of the protectorate over any island but New Guinea having ever been intended, it was not even certain that there would be a protectorate over New Guinea itself. The only promise we could get was that the whole question should be brought before the Cabinet without delay. Not getting any answer up to the end of July, we sent in a formal request for one, but we got none; and the last days of the session were passing away when (at the instance of Sir Saul Samuel) a question was asked by Sir William McArthur, in the House of Commons, on the 11th of August, to which Mr. Gladstone replied that the protectorate would be established over New Guinea, with a "jurisdiction sufficient to afford protection to the natives against lawless action, by whomsoever taken, whether by British subjects or by foreigners;" but that it would not extend over any other islands. Two days afterwards Parliament was prorogued, and Cabinet Ministers, politicians, and heads of departments dispersed.

Meanwhile the Legislatures of all the Australias except New South Wales were accepting the Convention resolutions; but, unhappily, at the very moment when unanimity among them was most needed if any good was to be done by ourselves, the two great colonies once more fell out. For a time we hoped their differences would be confined to the question of the Federal Bill, because New South Wales had more than once declared that so far as New Guinea and the *récidivistes* were concerned she was at one with Victoria. But on the 24th September the order I have mentioned came from Mr. Stuart to Sir Saul Samuel not to press Lord Derby for an answer even about the protectorate. Immediately upon this, Mr. Murray-Smith having been meanwhile armed with authority to represent Tasmania, and Sir Arthur Blyth having been instructed by South Australia to co-operate, renewed consultations took place between us all. Mr. Murray-Smith proposed that we should send in at once a joint letter to Lord Derby, asking for a reply to our letter of the 23rd July. But every Cabinet Minister was out of town, and it was certain that such a letter would only be put into a pigeon-hole. An answer of any kind was quite out of the question before Ministers reassembled, and I felt sure that it was wisest to exhaust every effort before separating myself from the representative of New South Wales. I had nothing whatever to guide me as to whether New Zealand would even pay her share of the £15,000, much less whether she would support the Federal Council Bill. Notwithstanding Mr. Gladstone's announcement on the 11th August, I knew enough of what had been going on to make me very doubtful whether, without New South Wales, Lord Derby would give us a written answer at all. It seemed to me far wiser and more prudent to wait till the Ministers reassembled, to try up to the very last moment for the co-operation of New South Wales, and, if this were finally refused, then to have another interview with Lord Derby, at which we could ask for a decision much more effectually than by seeking for an answer to a letter which had become *effete* from the moment of Mr. Gladstone's announcement in the House of Commons. After many conferences Mr. Murray-Smith and I agreed to adopt that course. In the meantime a meeting of the Agents-General took place, at which I entreated Sir Saul Samuel to telegraph to his Government for leave to act with us, so that the concert of the Agents-General, which had already done so much, might not be broken. The result has happily been that he has been left free to act with us, and for the first time a united request from all the colonies goes in to Lord Derby to-night for an interview, at which we have good reason to hope for a final decision. A copy of our letter is enclosed.

The course which I have striven for throughout, of not separating ourselves from New South Wales if it could possibly be avoided, has therefore been at last successful, and I make no apology for having unswervingly pursued it; for there is no disguising that there is very much yet to do before the protectorate is established. The Cabinet decision of August excluded any other islands; and even as to New Guinea the exact meaning of Mr. Gladstone's announcement in the House has yet to be defined. It was strictly limited by its terms to protection for the natives; there was nothing said about protection for English settlers. I know for certain that, having regard to the interdicts in the existing Imperial Acts, and other legal difficulties, it is not thought to be so easy a thing to create a jurisdiction that would be acceptable to Australasia: and you may depend upon it that without a perfectly united front in all the colonies, we never shall move Lord Derby a single inch about the other islands, whose fate is at least as interesting to New Zealand as that of New Guinea is to the Australian continent.