

At a meeting which thereupon took place between us we requested Sir Saul Samuel to ask his Government whether he was to understand his instructions as meaning that he was not even to join in any further representation to Lord Derby on the *récidiviste* scheme; and I am glad to say that, in answer to his message, he received permission to join in such a representation. South Australia and Queensland will do the same. On that single subject, therefore, though only on that one, the Agents-General can still act together in the same concert as before; and whereas at one time, as I said to you in my letter of the 24th October, No. 465, it was a question with us whether it would be of any use to have the proposed interview with Lord Derby, we are now prepared to meet his Lordship whenever he shall be pleased to appoint a day.

The refusal of the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales to consider the Convention resolutions was received here on the 31st October. Although I think this decision will go far to prevent the introduction of any "Enabling Bill" in the Imperial Parliament this session; it will not affect our interview with Lord Derby in any sense prejudicial to the policy which New Zealand desires to see adopted in regard to the Pacific question; on the contrary, it really clears the ground and enables the Agents-General to see more clearly than before the line which each ought to take at that interview. I am anxiously waiting, nevertheless, to know the decision of New Zealand about the Convention resolutions, as Mr. Service has telegraphed to Mr. Murray-Smith that it was probable they would be adopted by you in some modified form.

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

F. D. BELL.

No. 47.

The PREMIER to the AGENT-GENERAL.

PARLIAMENT passed resolutions favourable annexation New Guinea and other islands, agreeing contribute share fifteen thousand for New Guinea, postponing consideration Federal Council Bill until next session. Oppose Federal Council Bill at present far as concerns New Zealand. Governor cabling Colonial Office.

13th November, 1884.

ROBERT STOUT.

No. 48.

The PREMIER to the AGENT-GENERAL.

SIR,—

Government Office, Wellington, 29th November, 1884.

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 7th October (No. 429), and to thank you for the interesting details you have given of the negotiations between the Agents-General and the Colonial Office.

2. In the concluding paragraph of that letter you say, with reference to a telegram sent to you by me on 3rd October, "I should be wanting in candour if I did not avow how much I had been stung by an order suddenly conveyed to me in so peremptory a tone."

3. As to this, I have to remark that no one can in a telegraphic message be expected to use the customary epistolary amenities, and I do not see why you should imagine that any Government, in directing its Agent-General to take a certain course, means the slightest affront to him. We are most desirous—and I feel sure every Ministry in New Zealand acquainted with your zeal and discretion would be the same—to give you the fullest latitude in dealing with the many complex and delicate questions you have, as Agent-General, to handle. As Ministers, however, we have a higher responsibility than even you have; and occasions must arise when it is our duty to inform an Agent-General in London how to act. When we heard, therefore, that you were acting with Sir Saul Samuel as representing the Colony of New South Wales, and not acting heartily with the Agent-General of Victoria, we—feeling that Victoria's action, rather than the inaction of New South Wales, should be supported—directed you by telegraph what to do. There was no question of trust or mistrust. We wished one course taken; and for so directing that course we were responsible to Parliament. When you requested an explanation of what you called the "peremptory terms" of the telegram, an explanation was at once afforded you. This you accepted as satisfactory. What need, then, was there of your complaint in the letter?

4. I have to express my regret that the concluding sentences of your letter are so couched as to lead to the belief that we are not desirous to keep New Zealand in a foremost position "on every question relating to the Pacific Islands." I do not for one moment suppose that such was your intention. It shows, however, how careful, even in letter-writing, the writers should be to express themselves. You must, moreover, see that to contrast your own action and that of Sir George Grey with the instructions sent by us to you, and to write of surrendering any position of New Zealand on the Pacific question, was alike uncalled-for and unnecessary.

5. I can assure you that we are sensible of your efforts to bring about a proper understanding as to the future of the Pacific Islands; that we feel grateful to you for the great labour to which you have voluntarily subjected yourself in writing your numerous memoranda, letters, &c.; and that we shall always be most anxious to loyally support you in every way possible. I must, however, reserve to myself and my colleagues our undoubted right to direct our Agent-General, in this as in other matters, as we think necessary for the benefit of the colony whose affairs, as Ministers, we have to manage.

I have, &c.,

ROBERT STOUT.

Sir F. Dillon Bell, K.C.M.G., Agent-General for New Zealand, London.