

sovereignty. They adhere to resolution of Sydney Convention and address Federal Council 5th February on subject New Hebrides. In their opinion there are very strong reasons for believing, if France could not obtain increase of territory, she will have very soon no alternative but to relinquish sending prisoners to Pacific. Should she not, legislative powers of Australasian Colonies must be sought to protect interests by exclusion. Under the circumstances, no advantage gained by acceptance of proposals, but only very serious injustice." I hope your colony will take up the same position.

Brisbane, 20th March, 1886.

S. W. GRIFFITH.

### No. 23.

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

*Re* New Hebrides, see letter and telegrams to our Agent-General Victoria. They seem substantially same as yours, and were agreed to in Cabinet. Ministers now dispersed, and no Cabinet for week.

ROBERT STOUT.

20th March, 1886.

### No. 24.

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

No. 17. YOUR telegram to your Agent-General quite satisfactory; but do not read your memorandum to  
No. 15. Governor in same light. DUNCAN GILLIES,  
22nd March, 1886. Premier.

### No. 25.

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

SIR,—

Premier's Office, Melbourne, 24th March, 1886.

No. 9. I received with great pleasure your letter of the 5th instant respecting the proposal of France to take possession of the New Hebrides, and, though your letter has been acknowledged by telegraph, I desire in a more emphatic way to thank you for the assurance of your willingness to act with this and the other Australian Governments in the endeavour to prevent so undesirable a result as the acquisition of the New Hebrides by France.

No. 15. Your subsequent telegram of the 17th appeared to me, however, to somewhat qualify the  
No. 18. sentiments of your letter, and hence my telegram of the 19th instant; but I was glad to be reassured  
Nos. 19, 21. by your telegrams of the 19th and 20th instant, in the former of which you state that you had instructed the Agent-General of New Zealand to be firm in opposition to annexation.

Viewing the fatal facility with which valuable possessions in these seas have been allowed to lapse into the possession of other nations, I cannot but regard the position of the New Hebrides as extremely critical, and I do feel that if there be a sentiment of common patriotism in Australasia it should lead our Governments to stand together on questions of such great moment to the future of Australasia. It is only by a united voice that we can hope to gain consideration, and I beg that you will allow me thus to express my gratification at the attitude of your Government on this question.

Public opinion here is very strong on the subject: on two successive days last week I was waited upon by deputations with regard to it. Reports of these I enclose herewith.

I have, &c.,

D. GILLIES,

Premier.

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

### Enclosure 1.

[Extract from the *Argus*, 18th March, 1886.]

#### THE PACIFIC ISLANDS QUESTION.

A DEPUTATION consisting of the board of directors of the Australian Natives' Association, and representing the various Victorian branches of the society, waited upon the Premier yesterday, for the purpose of strengthening the hands of the Government in its efforts generally to preserve the unannexed Pacific Islands from foreign dominion, and particularly to urge the Government to do all in its power to prevent the annexation of the New Hebrides group by France.

The Chief Secretary (Mr. Deakin) introduced the deputation, which was also accompanied by Mr. Cooper and Mr. Anderson (Creswick), M.L.A.s.

Mr. A. J. PEACOCK (the president of the association) observed that the association was not a political society of a partisan character. It was a national society. The object of the deputation was to express its appreciation of the efforts already made by the Government in regard to federation, annexation, and kindred questions, and, if possible, to strengthen the hands of the present Administration in connection with any steps which they might take as to such matters. It had been said that the French Government contemplated the annexation of the New Hebrides. The association, which had tried to help the late Premier, now wanted to assist the present Premier. It was of opinion that the whole of these islands belong to Australasia, and was anxious that the Victorian Government should communicate with the other Australian Governments, so that a united protest against such contemplated action might be sent Home. The fathers of members of the association had objected to the importation of convicts into Victoria, and the sons of those fathers now objected to any islands in the vicinity of Australia being used by any Power as a place in which to keep criminals. Australian natives gladly welcomed French, Germans, and other