

1886.

NEW ZEALAND.

PROPOSED ACQUISITION OF NEW HEBRIDES BY FRANCE

(PAPERS RELATING TO THE).

[In continuation of A.-8A, 1885.]

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

No. 1.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the PREMIER.

PROTOCOL signed Germany France, pledging Germany do nothing prevent France taking Raiatea and Hebrides.

F. D. BELL.

4th February, 1886.

No. 2.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the PREMIER.

SIR,—

7, Westminster Chambers, London, S.W., 12th February, 1886.

On the 1st February a series of White Books was presented to the Reichstag, which had been promised by the German Emperor in his Speech from the throne, on the subject of the colonial policy of the Empire; when it transpired that a protocol had been signed between the French and German Governments, pledging Germany to do nothing to prevent France from taking possession not only of Raiatea, but of the New Hebrides: I hoped to have received a copy of the White Book containing this protocol in time to send you authentic particulars to-day, but it has not yet come from Berlin. I enclose, however, an extract from the *Times*, in which the clause relating to those groups is said to be in the following terms: "The Government of the Emperor undertakes to the French Government to do nothing which may hinder the eventual taking into possession by France of the isles and islets forming the group called 'Îles sous le Vent' (Raiatea, Huahine, and Borabora), and connected with the Archipelago of Tahiti or the Society Islands. It takes the same engagement respecting the New Hebrides Archipelago, situate near New Caledonia. The Government of the Republic, in case of taking possession of either group, undertakes to respect all rights acquired by German subjects, especially as regards the enlistment of Native labourers, and to come to an agreement to this effect with the Imperial Government." I sent you a telegram on the 4th instant containing the gist of this protocol.

The Federal Council having resolved to address the Queen praying that no change should be made in the agreement now subsisting between England and France respecting the New Hebrides, my colleagues the other Agents-General have been instructed to press the desire of all the colonies on Her Majesty's Government; and a meeting of the Agents-General, including the High Commissioner for Canada, took place yesterday, when we agreed to ask for an interview with Lord Granville, in order to make a general representation to his Lordship on the present state of affairs affecting that group.

As I may perhaps be called upon to initiate the discussion with Lord Granville, and to prepare any paper which his Lordship may require us to send in afterwards, I am deferring for the present what I should otherwise have said to you to-day. But I do not like a mail to leave without mentioning that Mr. Garrick told us, at our meeting yesterday, that, in compliance with instructions from Mr. Griffith, he had just sent in a letter to the Colonial Office, containing an expression to the effect that "the loyalty of the colonies might be affected" if the Imperial Government gave up the New Hebrides to France. Although I feel perfectly sure that any language bearing even the appearance of a menace of that kind would meet with no sympathy from the people of New Zealand, I have not thought it right on that account to separate myself from concerted action with my colleagues for an interview with Lord Granville.

The sudden downfall of Lord Salisbury's Government prevented Colonel Stanley from giving me the formal interview he had promised on the general question of the Pacific Islands; but Lord Granville will presently receive me thereon. In the meantime, having had some reason to think

A.—3.
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No. 36.

that pressure would be brought upon the Colonial Office for an immediate decision as to the administration of New Guinea—a matter which, as you know, had for a long time been under the consideration of Her Majesty's late Ministers—I thought it necessary to represent that nothing final ought to be settled without previous consultation with the Governments of New South Wales and New Zealand, and on the 1st instant I sent you a telegram saying that you might rely upon this being done. I took the opportunity of adding, in the same message, that the arrangement recently made between England and France respecting Raiatea provided for the grant of equal rights of trade to English subjects. It may be convenient, for purposes of record in your office, to transmit herewith copy of a letter I received from the Colonial Office containing the telegrams which had passed between the Secretary of State and His Excellency the Governor respecting Raiatea and Samoa. I also append some newspaper extracts which have appeared on the subject of those islands.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

F. D. BELL.

Enclosure 1.

[Extract from the *Times*, Thursday, 4th February, 1886.]

A GERMAN WHITE BOOK.

Berlin, 3rd February.

THE first of the new series of White Books, promised in the Imperial Speech from the throne, on the subject of the Emperor's colonial affairs has just been presented to the Reichstag in the shape of a protocol recording the agreement come to by France and Germany with regard to their coterminous territories on the west coast of Africa. The substance of this agreement was recently given in the *Times*; but it may now be as well to quote the more important clauses of the protocol, which is dated the 24th December, and bears the signatures of Count Herbert Bismarck and Baron de Courcel. And, first, with regard to the Gulf of Biafra: "The Government of His Majesty the Emperor of Germany renounces in favour of France all rights to the sovereignty or protectorate over the territories acquired south of the River Campo by German subjects and which have been placed under His Majesty's protection. It undertakes to abstain from all political action south of a line following the said river from its mouth to the point where it meets the meridian situate ten degrees of longitude east of Greenwich, and from that point the parallel continued to its junction with the meridian situate fifteen degrees of longitude east of Greenwich. Neither of the two Governments will take measures which may affect the liberty of navigation and commerce of subjects of the other on the waters of the River Campo in the portion which will remain intermediate, and which will be used in common by the subjects of both."

The next field of agreement is the Slave Coast, where—"The Government of the French Republic, recognizing the German protectorate over the Togo territory, renounces the rights which it might assert over the territory of Porto Seguro, by virtue of its relations with King Mensa. The Government of the Republic also renounces its rights over Little Popo, and recognizes the German protectorate over this territory. French merchants at Porto Seguro and Little Popo will preserve for their persons and their goods, as well as in their business transactions, until the conclusion of the Customs arrangement hereinbefore provided for, the benefit of the usages which they at present enjoy; and all the advantages or immunities which would be accorded to German subjects will be equally acquired by them. They will in particular preserve the right of transporting and freely exchanging their goods between their warehouses or shops in Porto Seguro and Little Popo and the neighbouring French territory, without being liable to the payment of duty. The same privilege will in return be conceded to the German merchants. The German and French Governments reserve the right of consulting, after an inquiry on the spot, in order to arrive at the establishment of common Customs regulations in the territories comprised between the English possessions of the Gold Coast to the west and Dahomey to the east. The boundary between the German territories and the French territories of the Slave Coast will be fixed on the spot by a mixed Commission. The line of demarcation will start from a point to be determined on the coast between the territories of Little Popo and Angona. In tracing this line northwards account shall be taken of the boundaries of native possessions. The German Government undertakes to abstain from all political action to the east of the line so drawn. The French Government undertakes to abstain from all political action to the west of it."

With respect then to the Senegambia—"The Government of the German Emperor renounces all rights or pretensions which it might assert over the territories situate between the River Nuñez and the Mallecorry, especially over Coba and Kabitai, and recognizes the French sovereignty in these territories."

Public opinion here in Berlin seems inclined to grumble at this concession to France, and to consider it as the least satisfactory portion of the agreement. Under the firm conviction that his possessions would enjoy the immediate protection of the Empire, a Hamburg merchant named Colin had acquired by treaty from the native chiefs considerable stretches of territory between the Coba and the Kabitai, and now he finds himself compelled to trade under the French flag; but, on the demand of the German Government, France, as expressed in an exchange of separate notes, has agreed to grant to the Colin Company exceptional privileges.

The next clause in the protocol refers to a very different part of the world—to Oceania—where "The Government of the Emperor undertakes to the French Government to do nothing which may hinder the eventual taking into possession by France of the isles and islets forming the group called 'Des Îles sous le Vent en Océanie,' and connected with the Archipelago of Tahiti, or the Society Islands. It takes the same engagement respecting the New Hebrides Archipelago, situate near New Caledonia. The Government of the Republic, in case of taking possession of either group, undertakes to respect all rights acquired by German subjects, especially as regards

the enlisting of native labourers, and to come to an agreement to this effect with the Imperial Government.”

Enclosure 2.

[Extract from the *Times*, Friday, 5th February, 1886.]

THE NEW HEBRIDES.

To the Editor of the *Times*.

SIR,—With reference to the protocol said, in your Berlin correspondence of yesterday, to have been concluded on the 24th December between the French and German Governments, by which Germany agrees to recognize the eventual occupation of the New Hebrides by France, I beg to state that I have just received a telegraphic despatch from the Hon. James Service, Premier of Victoria and President of the Federal Council of Australasia, now sitting at Hobart, stating that the question is under the consideration of the Council, and that it is proposed to address Her Majesty on the subject without delay.

I have, &c.,

ROBERT MURRAY SMITH,
Agent-General for Victoria.

Victoria Office, Westminster, 4th February.

Enclosure 3.

[Extract from the *Times*, Saturday, 6th February, 1886.]

OCEANIA.

Paris, 5th February.

THE new German White Book, which has been summarized by the Berlin correspondent of the *Times*, states that Germany has undertaken to do nothing to hinder the eventual taking possession by France of the “Îles sous le Vent en Océanie,” connected with the Archipelago of Tahiti, or the Society Islands. It is natural to inquire by what right Germany empowers France to take possession of these isles, and on what principle France accepts such a right, seeing that she expressly renounced it in 1847. It is true that in 1880, on the complaint of some German merchants, Germany made a show of intending to annex this group. It is also true that in the same year the preface to the Bill ratifying the cession of the Society Islands and their dependencies by King Pomare V. to France contained this passage: “The efforts made by the Powers to obtain possessions in these waters seem to the French Government to make it indispensable to take measures calculated to strengthen our position in these archipelagos. These incidents, moreover, derived a special significance from the scheme for cutting the Isthmus of Panama, the execution of which must singularly increase the importance of the Oceanian isles situated along the line of this route from America to Australia.”

But it appears, unless since then new arrangements have been made which modify the previous settlement, that the treaty, of which the text is sent herewith, is absolute and formal, and that Germany can neither grant nor France accept any right of possession whatever over the Îles sous le Vent in Oceania. I hasten to call attention to this treaty before the French Chamber proceeds to legislate on the Franco-German Convention. For if it be still in force it should be made known in time to prevent a difficulty from being raised unnecessarily; and if it has ceased to be in force the fact should be stated, so that no doubt may remain in the minds of those who remember the negotiation. The treaty is as follows: “Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and His Majesty the King of the French, desiring to put aside a cause of discussion between their respective Governments on the subject of the islands of the Pacific Ocean described below, have thought it right to bind themselves reciprocally as follows: (1.) To recognize formally the independence of the Islands of Huaheine, Raiatea, and Borabora, to windward of Tahiti, and of the small adjacent islands dependent on the latter. (2.) Never to take possession of the said islands, or of one or more of them, either absolutely, under the title of a protectorate, or under any form whatever. (3.) Never to recognize that one chief or prince of Tahiti may at the same time reign over one or several of the islands mentioned below, or that one chief or prince reigning in one or several of the latter may at the same time reign at Tahiti, the reciprocal independence of the islands above described and of the Island of Tahiti and its dependencies being accepted in principle. The undersigned, Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Her Britannic Majesty and the Minister Plenipotentiary of His Majesty the King of the French at the Court of London, provided with the necessary powers, declare, in consequence hereby, that their said Majesties reciprocally enter into this agreement.”

If this treaty, signed on the 19th June, 1847, by M. de Jarnac and Lord Palmerston, still holds good, Germany has made no great sacrifice by the concession just accorded to France.

Enclosure 4.

[Extract from the *Times*, Monday, 8th February, 1886.]

THE NEW HEBRIDES.

Melbourne, 6th February.

PUBLIC attention is much occupied with the Franco-German agreement mentioned in the last German White Book, whereby Germany undertakes to do nothing to hinder the eventual taking possession by France of the New Hebrides.

The Victorian Government has telegraphed to Mr. Murray Smith, its Agent-General in London, for further information on the subject, at the same time pointing out the necessity of representations to France in order to obtain renewed assurances from that country of non-intervention in the New Hebrides.

No. 3.

The PREMIER to the AGENT-GENERAL.

ACT with Agents-General protesting against New Hebrides being given to France.
13th February, 1886.

ROBERT STOUT

No. 4.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the PREMIER

HEBRIDES. Agents-General arranged yesterday act together interview Granville.
13th February, 1886.

F. D. BELL.

No. 5.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the PREMIER.

7, Westminster Chambers, London, S.W., 20th February, 1886.

No. 3. SIR,— I received in due course your telegram of the 13th instant, directing me to act with the other Agents-General in protesting against the New Hebrides being given to France; and I replied
No. 4. that there had been a meeting of the Agents-General the day before, when it was agreed to ask Lord Granville for an interview, and when the general line to be taken on that occasion was settled.

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

F. D. BELL.

No. 6.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the PREMIER.

7, Westminster Chambers, London, S.W., 24th February, 1886.

SIR,— The interview with Earl Granville on the subject of the New Hebrides, which, I informed
No. 2. you in my letter of the 12th instant, had been asked for by the Agents-General, took place yesterday. We had the satisfaction of being accompanied by the High Commissioner of Canada; the Dominion Government, which has now become as much a Pacific as an Atlantic Power, desiring to associate itself with Australasia in all that relates to the future of the Pacific Islands.

My colleagues did me the honour, once more, of asking me to present our case to Lord Granville. I was fortunate enough to receive their unanimous approval in my endeavour to give our story clearly, and Lord Granville was also pleased to state, in the reply he made to us, that he himself agreed with every word I had said

I regret that it has not been possible for me to prepare notes of what passed, in time to send you by this mail, as they have to be verified by my colleagues; but this will be done without delay. In the meantime, Lord Granville having desired us to communicate with our Governments confidentially upon a proposal just made by the French Ambassador to Lord Rosebery respecting the New Hebrides, we asked the Agent-General for Victoria to send a joint circular telegram, copy of which I have now the honour to transmit herewith.

A question was put in the House of Commons respecting the New Hebrides two nights ago by Mr. Baden-Powell. I annex a *Times* report of the question, and of the reply of Mr. Bryce, Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

F. D. BELL.

Enclosure.

[Extract from the *Times*, Tuesday, 23rd February, 1886.]

HOUSE OF COMMONS, MONDAY, 22ND FEBRUARY.—THE NEW HEBRIDES.

MR. BADEN-POWELL asked the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs a question with reference to the independence of the New Hebrides and of Raiatea, and particularly as to the convention recently entered into by Germany and France, whereby Germany concedes to France the right to take possession of these territories.

MR. BRYCE.—Agreements do exist between Great Britain and France whereby both Powers engage to respect the independence of the groups of islands referred to; but a conditional arrangement has been entered into with France in relation to the Raiatea group, securing full advantages to British commerce. Her Majesty's Government are aware of the convention between Germany and France alluded to by the honourable member, but it is not to the effect stated. It does not affect the agreement between Great Britain and France, but merely stipulates that Germany will do nothing to hinder France from eventually obtaining the islands in question. Under these circumstances Her Majesty's Government did not receive, and did not expect to receive, notice of such convention, nor to be invited to take part in it. The Australian Colonies continue to object to the abandonment of the agreement with France concerning the New Hebrides, and correspondence is passing on the subject with the Colonial Governments.

No. 7.

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

I HAVE received the following very important telegram from the Agents-General, and forward it to you: "*Secret and Confidential*: Had an interview with Secretary of State for the Colonies. All

the Agents-General, accompanied by Canadian Commissioner, received express assurance Her Majesty's Government are determined to strictly adhere to pledge that nothing shall be done to change position of New Hebrides without previously consulting colonies. But he requests us to inform Governments confidentially that the French Ambassador has offered the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs France will cease transportation altogether in the Pacific if she is allowed have New Hebrides; whereon has replied nothing shall be done without consulting the colonies, which was recognized by the Ambassador. Secretary of State for the Colonies then said that the proposals might be more acceptable if Rapa were given to England; and now Granville invites Governments to consider the proposals of French Ambassador, and to communicate result as soon as possible consistent with the importance of subject. Rights British subjects and missionaries guaranteed. Communicate to other Governments."

Melbourne, 26th February, 1886.

DUNCAN GILLIES,

Premier.

No. 8.

The PREMIER to the AGENT-GENERAL.

SIR,—

Premier's Office, Wellington, 27th February, 1886.

I have formally acknowledged the letters received by me by the "Tongariro," by the mail *via* San Francisco, and this morning by the "Aorangi."

Referring to the New Guinea and Pacific Islands question, I do not think it is necessary to add anything to what I have said in previous letters. It can hardly be said that the position of New Guinea is satisfactory. South Australia has withdrawn from the guaranteed payment of £15,000, and we must wait until we see what the other colonies intend to do regarding this payment.

2. It is possible that there may be at the end of March, or in the first week of April, a meeting of the Governors and Premiers of the colonies in Melbourne, to deal with the subject of defence, and at this meeting the New Guinea question may be discussed.

3. Last night I received a cablegram, marked "Secret and confidential," from the Premier of Victoria. It had been forwarded, by the consent of the Agents-General, to Victoria, for communication to the other Colonial Governments. I enclose it with this letter. I may say I am not surprised No. 7. at the proposal it contains. It has been apparent to me for some time that the cost of New Caledonia to France must have been great, and no doubt the French Government now see that there is little hope of reducing the expenditure. New Caledonia can produce little, her mines have failed, and her soil is not so fertile as to enable her to rely on vegetable products. The convicts who have served their time are unable to maintain themselves in the colony; they have either to leave, seeking a home in Australasia or Fiji, or else they commit some fresh crime and are again kept at the expense of the State. Colonization in any proper sense of the term is impossible. The French officials no doubt have seen that what is required to make New Caledonia approach a self-supporting position is some outlet for settlement of the convicts and emigrants. This wish can only be obtained by the annexation of the New Hebrides. These islands are rich in soil, and will maintain a considerable population. They are near New Caledonia, and the French have several settlements amongst them. It is only natural, therefore, that France should try and obtain possession of the New Hebrides.

4. From the telegrams that have appeared in the papers we learn that Germany raises no objection to the French annexation of the group. The proposal made to the English Secretary for Foreign Affairs—namely, that no more convicts will be sent to the Pacific if these islands are obtained by France—has, no doubt, been thought by the French authorities to be one that will be pleasing to the colonies.

5. I do not deny that it is a great concession; for, no doubt, having New Caledonia the French *dépôt* for *récidivistes* is much worse than having New Caledonia and New Hebrides French colonies for moral people. I shall bring the matter before the Cabinet next week, and what I state in this letter I am, therefore, only expressing as my own views: still I am of opinion that in New Zealand, and, I believe, in the Australian Colonies, there will be no assent made to the proposition of the French Ambassador.

6. The reasons which will induce the colonists to refuse this assent will be these, amongst others:—

First. The New Hebrides have been practically looked upon as a British possession.

Second. They have been the seat of the Presbyterian Mission in the Pacific, and any advance they have made in civilization has been due to that Church.

Third. It is well known that, whilst the French Government at Home allows absolute freedom in religious matters—indeed, is thought to be opposed to the Catholic Church—yet abroad, and in the Pacific especially, occupation by France is thought to mean the granting of privileges to the Roman Catholic Church that are not granted to any other religious body.

Fourth. There is also a strong feeling in the colonies that they should protest against any further occupation by foreign Powers of the Pacific Islands.

Fifth. The islanders themselves are strongly opposed to French occupation.

Sixth. The labour question will complicate the issue, for it is apparent to me that the getting of labourers in the islands for plantations in Fiji and elsewhere is attended with great and increasing difficulty. It will be hopeless for English planters to obtain any islanders now from the Solomon and other islands that have been taken possession of by Germany. The New Guinea natives are entirely unsuitable for labourers; and, if settlers can obtain no labour from the New Hebrides, they will be heavily handicapped.

Seventh. The treatment of the natives of New Caledonia by the French Government raises the question whether, on philanthropical grounds even, it would be proper for Great Britain to assent, especially when the natives are objecting.

7. I do not know if it would be consonant with the dignity of the French Republic for the Government to listen to any proposal to dispose of its interest in New Caledonia to Britain. I believe that this would be better for the French Government than to go on at great expense in maintaining this Pacific colony; and, if the English Government could make an arrangement to purchase France's interest, I think that the Colonies of New South Wales, Victoria, and Queensland—to whom the possession of New Caledonia is perhaps of greater importance than to New Zealand—would gladly undertake the liability. I am afraid, however, there are great difficulties in the way of bringing this about; but I am firmly convinced that such a step would be more pleasing to the colonists than any agreement to give up the New Hebrides.

8. If the foreign policy of our Empire demands that such a concession should be given to France as allowing her to annex the New Hebrides, seeing that we have got in the Pacific no equivalent for the surrender of Raiatea, I hope you will not hesitate to press for the obtaining of Rapa, and such other concessions from France as you think may be desirable for the colonies.

9. I shall communicate with the Premier of Victoria, and, if the Cabinet desires anything to be added to this letter, I may possibly wire you next week.

10. I write this now as the mail is just leaving, and as I am able to put my views more fully in a letter than by telegram.

11. I have marked this despatch "Confidential," because it covers the telegram which is marked "Secret and confidential," but I leave you to make such use of it as you may think expedient.

Sir F. Dillon Bell, K.C.M.G., Agent-General.

I have, &c.,

ROBERT STOUT.

No. 9.

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

SIR,—

Premier's Office, Wellington, 5th March, 1886.

No. 7. I have the honour to inform you that, on receipt of your secret and confidential telegram of the 26th February, and as my colleagues were then not available for consultation, I addressed a letter to our Agent-General, in it giving my views on the subject of the New Hebrides, the part of the letter dealing with which I now enclose for your information. Since then the Cabinet has fully indorsed my action, and it only remains therefore for me to convey to you the assurances of this Government of their willingness to co-operate with you and the other Australian Governments in the endeavour to prevent so undesirable a result as the acquisition of the New Hebrides by France.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Premier, Melbourne, Victoria.

ROBERT STOUT.

Enclosure.

PARAGRAPHS 3, 4, 5, and part of 6 of letter from the Premier to the Agent-General, 27th February. (See No. 8.)

No. 10.

The PREMIER to the AGENT-GENERAL.

SIR,—

5th March, 1886.

No. 7. I have the honour to inform you that the secret and confidential telegram from the Victorian Premier on the subject of the New Hebrides, &c., has been considered by the Cabinet, who have approved of my letter to you, dated the 27th February last.

I have, &c.,

Sir F. Dillon Bell, K.C.M.G., Agent-General.

ROBERT STOUT.

No. 11.

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

No. 7. HAS your Government yet considered the telegram from the Agents-General dated the 24th February, and communicated to you on the 26th idem? If so, I shall be obliged if you will favour me by letting me know your views.

13th March, 1886.

DUNCAN GILLIES,

Premier.

No. 12.

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

REPLY sent 5th March.

15th March, 1886.

ROBERT STOUT.

No. 13.

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

No. 7. WITH reference to Murray Smith's secret telegram of the 24th February, and secret telegram of Secretary of State for the Colonies to South Australia 3rd March, is your Government disposed to concur?

15th March, 1886.

PREMIER.

No. 14.

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

WE have replied to Agents-General's telegram through our Agent-General, and sent copy to Premier, No. 8. Victoria. To formal telegram of Secretary of State for Colonies, we have replied entertain strong No. 9. objection to cession New Hebrides, but would be modified were Rapa ceded to England and deportation convicts French possessions in South Sea Islands stopped, missionaries and other British subjects protected, equal rights all religious bodies.

17th March, 1886.

ROBERT STOUT.

No. 15.

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

RESPECTING the Secretary of State for the Colonies' telegram New Hebrides, I have addressed to Governor following memorandum: "Ministers strongly opposed to France acquiring New Hebrides, but it might be modified if France agreed cede Rapa England and stop sending convicts all French possessions Pacific. It would be distinctly understood missionaries and other British subjects New Hebrides not to be interfered with, and all religious bodies equal rights."

17th March, 1886.

ROBERT STOUT.

No. 16.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the PREMIER.

Récidivistes. French Ambassador has avowed to Lord Rosebery proposal relegate large number this year Isle Pines.

18th March, 1886.

F. D. BELL.

No. 17.

The PREMIER to the AGENT-GENERAL.

THREAT of sending *récidivistes* attempt to force us to yield annexation New Hebrides. Be firm opposition annexation. Get answer Rarotonga.

19th March, 1886.

ROBERT STOUT.

No. 18.

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

Re New Hebrides, was much gratified at your letter of 5th, which embodies admirable statement of case. Telegram of 17th not so satisfactory. Griffith, Queensland, will send you copy telegram agreed to by colonies in the Federation. Would be very pleased if you could signify concurrence. South Australia has done so except as to words referring to Federal Council. All colonies should agree as to unqualified rejection of proposal.

19th March, 1886.

DUNCAN GILLIES,
Premier.

No. 19.

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

WE have wired our Agent-General as follows: "Threat of sending *récidivistes* attempt to force us to yield annexation New Hebrides. Be firm opposition annexation." Will you inform other Australian Governments?

19th March, 1886.

ROBERT STOUT.

No. 20.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the PREMIER.

CONSEQUENT what Rosebery said Waddington, relegation stopped at present. Understand your message to-day consistent Governor's yesterday. Kermadec would annex upon formal request Governor. Rarotonga still being discussed.

19th March, 1886.

F. D. BELL.

No. 21.

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

OUR telegrams crossed. Presume mine satisfactory.

20th March, 1886.

ROBERT STOUT.

No. 22.

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

WITH reference to Murray Smith's secret telegram of the 24th February, and the recent telegram of Secretary of State for the Colonies to Governor of South Australia (3rd March), and to Governor of Victoria (17th March), I have, as Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Federal Council, sent following telegram to Garrick for communication to Secretary of State: "Australian Colonies represented in Federal Council, except Fiji, which cannot be communicated with, have insuperable objection to any alteration of the *status quo ante* with respect to New Hebrides in direction of

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

respectable foreigners who came here, but they objected to receive the cast-off scum of other lands. They also objected to the maintenance of armies. If many of the Pacific Islands were annexed by foreign Powers, and utilized as naval stations, extra expenditure for defence purposes would have to be incurred by the Australian Colonies. Since this deputation had been decided upon Lord Granville had, it was stated, expressed a wish for a conference between the Governments of the Australian Colonies. The association thought that if the Government of this colony knew that the young men of the colony would be behind them in any action which they might take it might give the Government pleasure.

Mr. T. J. CONNELLY (vice-president of the association) said that the association thought that this deputation might be an incentive to the natives of New South Wales. The trouble was there. The association was trying all it could to co-operate with the natives of New South Wales and bring about a better feeling between the two colonies. Branches of the association had recently been established in New South Wales, and perhaps this deputation might incite the natives of that colony to take similar action. New Zealand was harder to reach. If the association had time it would send delegates to address the natives of New South Wales on these subjects. In the old countries the mutual jealousies of the Powers necessitated the maintenance of great armaments. Until recently, Australians hoped that such terrible burdens would not be necessary here, and that, consequently, the progress of these colonies as compared with that of other countries would be very rapid.

Mr. W. SMITHERS-GADD said it was satisfactory to note that Canada was with Australia in this matter. That fact ought to assist in the promotion of harmony between the colonies.

Mr. FIELD BARRETT held that the Pacific Islands belonged to Australasia, and that England made a mistake in allowing portion of New Guinea and New Caledonia to be annexed by foreign Powers. Ultimately Australasia must have all these islands, and, if England allowed any more of them to be appropriated by other Powers, she was entailing on our posterity unnecessary, cruel, and bloody war.

Mr. GILLIES said that he was pleased to meet the deputation, which had paid the Government a great compliment by coming. He had always felt pleased at the active part the association had taken in this movement. The association did great credit to Victoria. It had influenced public opinion to a large extent, and he was glad to hear that the association was trying to influence public opinion outside Victoria. Its efforts were certain to do much good, although they might not bear immediate fruit. All the colonies, if they got fair-play, were perfectly sound on this question. Little things might necessarily keep them apart; but all of them, he believed, either had communicated with England, or were about to do so, deprecating in the strongest possible language the possibility of these islands getting into the hands of any foreign Power. It was a very pleasant and new sensation for us to learn that the Canadian High Commissioner had been instructed by his Government to join the deputation of the Australian Agents-General on this subject. Mr. Griffith, representing the Federal Council, had sent a communication to the High Commissioner in London, thanking him very much for having joined the deputation, and requesting him to convey the thanks of the colonies to the Canadian Government. The colonies, with one united voice, would impress on the Imperial Government that under no circumstances should the annexation by any foreign Power of the New Hebrides be tolerated. He believed, from what he had heard, that the Imperial Government would not consent to any such annexation. But something more was required. No doubt if the colonies got lukewarm the chances were that, for some imagined Imperial advantage, some Minister of the Crown in England might be willing to come to terms with France, Germany, or some other Power, and allow them to get some of the Pacific Islands. It was only by vigilance and determination that the colonies could prevent anything of that kind being done. Of late there had been a vast improvement in the feeling between the colonies and the Mother-country. They understood at Home now better than they once did what it was to have kith and kin in this part of the world. That feeling was strengthening at Home, and, in spite of English Governments, would do more for us in cementing our hold on these islands than any communications between Governments. There was a strong feeling in England that they should do what they could to carry out our reasonable views. It was a matter of regret that the agreement of 1878 between England and France with regard to the New Hebrides was deemed necessary. Under that agreement neither Power could interfere with these islands. Previously there was no comparison between England's claim on the New Hebrides and the claim of any other Power. However, what had been done had been done. There was an agreement which had been more than once renewed. France pretended that if England gave her the New Hebrides she would not send out criminals to the Pacific. The colonies would not listen to such negotiations. If England only took a firm stand she would in a very little while be able to get the New Hebrides and the other islands. He did not believe that France had any idea of colonizing these islands. The claims of Australia to the possession of these islands were far and away superior to any that could be urged by other Powers. In the next fifty years Australasia would be sufficiently powerful, backed up as she would be by the whole Empire, to effectively lay hands on all these islands. The Government would leave nothing undone to urgently impress these views on the Imperial Government. It would almost go so far as to insist upon justice being done to us and to our posterity. The Government was in communication with the other Australian Colonies, and, as regards these questions, a very nice feeling existed between the Colonial Governments. There need be no doubt about the sending of a united protest. The Government had conveyed its views to the Agent-General for communication to the Imperial Government, and had also conveyed its views through the Governor. He believed all the other colonies were doing the same, and that the Imperial Government would be prepared to firmly accept their views and take a proper stand. But the colonies must also be vigilant, and might have to expend money in this direction. Victoria would, he believed, be willing to join with the other colonies in purchasing New Caledonia from the French. There was also some talk recently of the possibility of getting the remainder of New Guinea. That

might not be possible now, but might be possible in the future. It might not be possible to get all the islands at once, but it would be a great thing to prevent other Powers from extending their possessions there. The assistance of the association in the future on these matters would be of the greatest possible value to the Government, especially in connection with the young people of the other colonies. The association would do more to bring about a good feeling between the colonies than could be done by the heads of Governments meeting together, for the association began at the root. He should be always happy to obtain their assistance and advice on all these matters.

The deputation then withdrew.

Enclosure 2.

[Extract from the *Argus*, 19th March, 1886.]

THE PACIFIC ISLANDS QUESTION.

A DEPUTATION, consisting of the Heathen Missions Committee of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria, accompanied by the Rev. J. G. Paton, the South Sea Islands missionary, was introduced to the Premier yesterday by Mr. Harper, M.L.A., for the purpose of bringing under his notice the danger in which the New Hebrides group stand of being annexed by the French Government.

The Rev. A. HARDIE, chairman of the Heathen Missions Committee, said their Church was deeply concerned at the prospect of France taking possession of the New Hebrides group. They understood that the French had so manipulated the principal natives of the Island of Malicolo that they had signified their willingness to have their island placed under the protectorate of France. The deputation had every reason to believe that the natives of that island did not understand what their principal men were doing. Their Church was now sending two new missionaries to labour on this island. He believed about £160,000 had been expended on missions in this group, and their Church had invested £30,000. It felt that if the French were allowed to take possession of the islands it would be in the interests of another religion altogether. There could be little doubt that it was the ultimate intention of France to send large numbers of convicts to the South Seas. Such a course would be exceedingly detrimental not only to the islands, but to all the Australian Colonies. The Church felt that it was her bounden duty to protest against another Power taking possession of these islands, and to do all that was possible to have the group annexed to Great Britain. The Rev. J. G. Paton, who was in possession of full information, would be able to speak at length.

The Rev. J. G. PATON said they felt that this was a crisis in the history of their missions, as well as in the history of the colonies. The Premier's predecessor was deeply interested in this subject, and did all he could to induce Great Britain to annex the New Hebrides group. The late Agent-General, Mr. Murray Smith, also took a very deep interest in this movement. He had frequently conferred with that gentleman on this subject when he was recently in London. He hoped that what had been done in this matter would prepare the way for the Premier and his Government, and enable them to secure the annexation of this group. There were many reasons in favour of annexation by Great Britain. He had had nearly thirty years' experience in connection with this mission. When he first knew the islands the natives were all cannibals: now, owing to missionary efforts, life and property were as safe as in Melbourne, although there was neither law nor police. Since 1882 twelve petitions had been sent by the natives to Great Britain praying for annexation. The last petition was got up by a representative of the *Argus*, and signed by eighty-six chiefs. All the natives were eager for British annexation, and feared the French, because of the way in which the French had treated the natives of islands already annexed by them. France never thought of annexation until the missionaries published a statement showing how advantageous it would be to British colonists to annex and develop the group. Unfortunately the colonists did not respond. But France did. When he was in London he was asked what terms should be made with France with regard to the annexation of the New Hebrides. His advice was—"Make no terms; let us protest to the last; and, if France annexes the group by force, Australia in course of time will claim otherwise what is now desired if our country allows France to annex." Those islands were very rich and fertile; there were fine spacious harbours, which the holding of by France would be dangerous to Australian shipping and commerce. It was said that there was an agreement between England and France that neither should annex this group. But a similar agreement in respect to Raiatea had been broken. France said it was only for three years, and her flag now floated over that island. The Récidiviste Bill having now passed the Senate, the French Government would be able to pour into the Pacific a hundred thousand of her worst criminals. These people would be free to go where they pleased so long as they did not return to France. Wherever the French had seized islands they had done great damage to the Protestant missions already established there. In one case the French had seized a mission-station, and when inquiry was made and redress demanded by the British Government it was found that the French had placed on shore as payment for the station a box of dynamite and some gold coins. France was doing all in its power to induce the natives to part with their lands preparatory to annexing the islands on some excuse. The recent agreement between Germany and France would make it appear as if everything were moving in the direction of the islands being annexed to France. If so, it would be a great curse to Australia. The French criminals, who were to be sent to the islands, were clever men. They would probably become pirates, and make the South Seas more dangerous for Australian commerce than they could ever be when inhabited by cannibals. From every point of view he hoped strong efforts would be made to have the islands annexed by Great Britain. When he was at Home he consulted on the subject with many noblemen—among them Lord Rosebery, who was heart and soul with them. They were in accord with his views; but, owing to the circumstances of the case, they were unable to move. He had received a private letter representing the views of five or six of these noblemen, which was to the following effect: "We have consulted over the matter, and our advice to you now is, let

Victoria annex ; or, better still, let a number of the Australian Colonies unite with her to annex, and throw the responsibility on Great Britain of refusing to recognize the annexation. This will arouse a storm in Parliament. We will support your views, and let you know how we sympathize with Australian interests in the present crisis." The deputation felt extremely anxious, and hoped that the Premier would, if possible, save the colonies and the islands from the calamity which threatened them. If the Government could help them in the present crisis, it would confer a lasting benefit, not only on the missions, but on the whole of the Australian Colonies. If a successful effort were not now made, it would necessitate the maintenance of large armaments in Australia to warn off dangerous neighbours.

The Rev. S. ROBINSON had a very strong conviction that the political aspect of this question had not been at all exaggerated. There was a strong probability of a European convulsion before long ; and, if in the time of war different European nations held ports in the South Seas, it would necessitate the Australian Colonies keeping up an armament equal to the armaments of European Powers.

Mr. GILLIES agreed that this question was a very serious one, and it appeared as if it were becoming more serious every day. If there was any foundation for a telegram that appeared in the *Argus*, it was proposed to send this year a thousand convicts to New Caledonia. They had good evidence that New Caledonia was scarcely capable of holding any more convicts—certainly not with satisfaction to the free people there. He thought, if a French Government proposed in reality to send out that number of convicts, it was only the beginning of a movement in that direction. As soon as he saw the telegram in the *Argus* he telegraphed to the Agent-General asking him to ascertain if there was really any truth in that statement. The English Government were certainly led to believe that, although the Récidiviste Act enabled the French Government to send out two classes of criminals to New Caledonia and some other islands of the Pacific, the French Government did not intend to do so, and that in all probability no new criminals would be sent to those islands. There could be no question that, if this was the beginning of a policy, very serious results might be looked for. He quite agreed with the view taken by the Rev. Mr. Paton that it would be a very serious thing, not only for the present but for the future of Australia, if the French got possession of several of those islands and populated them with the worst of her criminals. The Australian Colonies would require to take steps to protect themselves, and in the not very distant future they would require armaments, assisted by England, to protect their shores. That would involve a much more serious expense than they could at present contemplate. He was pleased to think that all the Australian Colonies had the same views on this subject. He had received on the previous day a deputation from the Australian Natives' Association, who expressed very strong views on the same question. He could only assure this deputation that anything this Government could do, either in communicating with the Imperial Government or the other colonies, he would be most anxious to do to avert any catastrophe of that kind. They were perfectly persuaded that the New Hebrides was a very valuable group. As far as they could possibly take steps to protect any of those islands from being annexed by France, Germany, or any other foreign Power, it would be their bounden duty to do so, in the interests of Australia. He could assure the deputation that the policy pursued by Mr. Service as head of the late Government they all strongly supported. He was satisfied that the civilizing influences brought to bear on the natives of the South Sea Islands by the missionaries of the Presbyterian Church were of the highest possible value. If looked at from the lowest point of view, merely as a civilizing influence, and not from a religious point of view, by any one, whether he believed in Christianity or not, the work of those missions could not be undervalued. That those islands would belong to Australia in future, whether they had to fight for them or not, he felt perfectly confident. If they could manage, by any influence they were able to bring to bear, to induce the Imperial Government to resist any attempt by France to take those islands, of course those efforts would be made by his Government. The only thing he feared was that in the struggles at Home, in pursuing certain lines of home policy, France might take the opportunity to hoist the French flag on those islands, and England would for the time being do little more than protest. But they were bound to live in hopes that England would be prepared to view the case differently. During the last two or three years a strong brotherly feeling had arisen between Great Britain and the Australian Colonies. There was now probably a better feeling between the centre of the Empire and these colonies than had ever existed, and it was to be hoped that that feeling would not be weakened but strengthened, and that gentlemen such as those whom the Rev. Mr. Paton had mentioned would use their influence in a way that would be highly valuable. He could assure the deputation that, as far as his Government was concerned, nothing whatever would be left undone to induce the Imperial Government to take such a stand as would warn French hands off any of those islands. He was glad of the opportunity of meeting the deputation, and of being assured of their co-operation and assistance to the Government by morally strengthening their hands.

The deputation then withdrew.

No. 26.

W. D. STEWART, Esq., M.H.R., to the PREMIER.

I INTENDED to get deputation to wait on you *re* New Hebrides. Hope Government will strongly protest against control by France.

3rd April, 1886.

W. D. STEWART.

No. 27.

The PREMIER to W. D. STEWART, Esq., M.H.R.

WE cannot at present make public our negotiations *re* islands ; but you can rely that we are doing

what we think best to maintain our position in Pacific, and to protect the rights of the Presbyterian Mission.

5th April, 1886.

ROBERT STOUT.

No. 28.

The PREMIER, New South Wales, to the PREMIER, New Zealand.

AM most anxious for a definite statement of your views as to the importance of cession of Rapa to England, as this is a question in which your colony is more deeply interested than any other. Should like an early and explicit cablegram from you, which I might publicly use.

3rd April, 1886.

P. A. JENNINGS.

No. 29.

The PREMIER, New Zealand, to the PREMIER, New South Wales.

THE Government think the acquisition of Rapa most important to England on account of its harbour and position.

5th April, 1886.

ROBERT STOUT.

No. 30.

The PREMIER to the AGENT-GENERAL.

SIR,—

Premier's Office, Wellington, 8th April, 1886.

No. 10,
No. 8.

Since I last wrote you regarding the Pacific question the agitation about the New Hebrides may be said to have advanced a stage. My letter dated the 27th February was generally approved of by the Victorian Government. The Victorian and Queensland Governments especially object to any compromise about the New Hebrides, and, just as I hinted in my previous letter, the strong feeling of the Presbyterian Church against any possible interference with their mission has been manifested in various quarters. As I pointed out, this Church has been exceptionally placed. It has not attempted to send missionaries to any field that was occupied by any other Church, and if its labours for years are to be interfered with by the handing-over of the New Hebrides to the French Government it will have a strong ground of complaint. If the New Hebrides must go I hope that you will use your best endeavours to see that every right or privilege that the Presbyterian Church now enjoys shall be maintained intact. Indeed, this ought to be a *sine quâ non* with the English Government. As I have said, Victoria and Queensland will listen to no compromise, and the threats made use of by the Victorian Premier are, I think, as unusual as they were uncalled for. I feel certain that the English Government is striving under very difficult circumstances to do its best for the colonies. The Pacific question has hitherto never loomed large in the eyes of British statesmen, and they are only now awakening to its full meaning, when I am afraid it is too late for any decisive action to be taken. There is no doubt that none of the Australian Colonies, except perhaps New South Wales, will listen to any compromise. The islands must either become British territory or remain, as at present, neutral ground. I do not know that I can add anything to what I have said about our position. We are just as desirous as the Governments of Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, and Tasmania that the New Hebrides should, if possible, become British territory; but, if they must go, then, as I have before stated to you, it is absolutely essential that some equivalent should be got, and that that equivalent should be Rapa. To us Rapa, as you know, is of immense importance. I forward you copies of resolutions passed by some of the Church courts of the Presbyterian Church, and also copy of telegrams and letters that have passed between the Victorian Premier and myself.

Regarding Samoa there have been no recent developments. Some of the German war-ships are now in Auckland on their way to the islands, and I expect that the "Nelson," with perhaps one or two other British vessels, will soon visit Fiji, Samoa, and Tonga.

I have received some information about the Deutsche Handel and Plantagenet Company. It appears to me that the company is not making much money for its shareholders. Indeed, as far as I can gather, there has only been a dividend of 4 per cent. on the "A" shares for 1884. The "B" shares, £125,000 in value, do not seem to have received any dividend.

Sir F. Dillon Bell, K.C.M.G., Agent-General.

I have, &c.,

ROBERT STOUT.

Enclosure 1.

[Extract from the *New Zealand Times*, 8th April, 1886.]

THE PRESBYTERIANS AND THE NEW HEBRIDES.

AUCKLAND, 7th April.—The resolutions of the Auckland Presbytery, opposing French annexation of the New Hebrides, are to be forwarded to the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church for transmission to the Government, either singly or jointly, with other representations from the southern sections of the Church.

DUNEDIN, 7th April.—The following resolution was passed by the Dunedin Presbytery: "The Presbytery having had its attention called to the threatened annexation by France of the New Hebrides, it is resolved to urge the New Zealand Government to use its utmost endeavours to secure what the British Government has led the Australian Colonies to expect—namely, that the independence of these islands would be preserved, and the interests of the mission so successfully carried on by the Presbyterian Church be maintained; and that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Hon. the Premier." Probably a public meeting on the question will be called.

Enclosure 2.

The PREMIER, New Zealand, to the PREMIER, Victoria. (No. 9.)

Enclosure 3.

The PREMIER, New Zealand, to the PREMIER, Victoria. (No. 19.)

Enclosure 4.

The PREMIER, Victoria, to the PREMIER, New Zealand. (No. 24.)

Enclosure 5.

The PREMIER, Victoria, to the PREMIER, New Zealand. (No. 25.)

No. 31.

The PRESBYTERY of DUNEDIN to the PREMIER.

8th April, 1886.

SIR,—

I have the honour, by direction of the Presbytery of Dunedin, to forward the following extract minute, dated the 17th April, 1886: "On the motion of Dr. Stuart, the following resolution was unanimously adopted: 'The Presbytery, having had its attention called to the threatened annexation by France of the New Hebrides, resolve to urge the New Zealand Government to use its utmost influence to secure what the British Government has led the Australasian Colonies to expect—namely, that the independence of these islands would be preserved, and the interests of the missions so successfully carried on by the Presbyterian Churches be fully maintained; and that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Premier of New Zealand.'"

I have, &c.,

ALEX. M. FINLAYSON,

Clerk of the Presbytery of Dunedin.

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

No. 32.

The CHAMBER of COMMERCE, Dunedin, to the PREMIER.

SIR,—

Chamber of Commerce, Dunedin, 14th April, 1886.

I have the honour, on behalf of the Chamber of Commerce, to forward copy of resolutions passed last evening at a general meeting of members of the Chamber and other citizens interested in the New Hebrides question. I beg specially to bring under your notice these resolutions, and, in so doing, beg that you would take such steps as you may deem most likely to give effect to the wishes of the meeting, so emphatically expressed by the speakers moving the resolutions, when bringing them before Her Majesty's Secretary for the Colonies in London.

I have, &c.,

JAS. MACKERRAS,

Chairman.

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

Enclosure.

COPY OF RESOLUTIONS.

It was moved by the Right Rev. Bishop Nevill, and seconded by W. D. Stewart, Esq., M.H.R., "That it is essential for the welfare of the British Colonies in the South Pacific that the New Hebrides Islands should not be ceded to any foreign Power."

Moved by Admiral Scott, and seconded by the Rev. Mr. Gibb, "That, considering the large sums that have been expended by British subjects in civilizing and christianizing the natives, and otherwise, in the New Hebrides Islands, and the deep interest the Australasian Colonies have manifested in the welfare of such natives, this meeting emphatically protests against any right being acquired by which a foreign Power would be entitled to send to the New Hebrides Islands criminals or political offenders, or by which the existing missionary arrangements would be interfered with."

Moved by his Worship the Mayor, and seconded by the Rev. Dr. Stuart, "That a copy of the resolutions passed be forwarded to the Government, with a request that the same be sent to Her Majesty's Secretary for the Colonies."

No. 33.

The PREMIER to the CHAMBER of COMMERCE, Dunedin.

SIR,—

15th April, 1886.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of yesterday's date, forwarding No. 32. resolutions passed at a meeting of the Chamber of Commerce relative to the New Hebrides.

In reply, I have to inform you, for the information of the Chamber, that the proposal of France to annex these islands has already received the earnest consideration of the Government, and the

Agent-General has been for some time past directed to remonstrate to the Colonial Office against it. The resolutions now passed shall, as requested, be forwarded to His Excellency the Governor, with the request that they may be submitted to the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

J. Mackerras, Esq., Chairman, Chamber of Commerce, Dunedin. I have, &c.,
ROBERT STOUT.

No. 34.

MEMORANDUM from MINISTERS to His Excellency the GOVERNOR.

15th April, 1886.

No. 32. THE Premier has the honour to forward the enclosed copies of resolutions passed at a meeting of the Dunedin Chamber of Commerce held on the 13th instant, relative to the proposed annexation of the New Hebrides by France. and to suggest that, as requested by the Chamber, they may be forwarded to the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

ROBERT STOUT.

[*Approximate Cost of Paper.*—Preparation, nil; Printing (1,400 copies), £9 6s. 0d.]

By Authority: GEORGE DEDSBURY, Government Printer, Wellington.—1886.