

no notice having been given. This I consider not only an unfair, but an arbitrary act. For these reasons I shall not voluntarily resign my position as Municipal Magistrate on the terms of your letter, but will wait and submit to the decision of the Municipal Board.

Wilfred Powell, Esq., H.B.M.'s Consul.

I have, &c.
THOS. MABIN.

No. 13.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the PREMIER.

SIR,—

27th January, 1887.

Since I wrote to you on Pacific Islands questions some time ago I have had the honour to receive your (printed) letter of the 24th November, in which you trace the important events that had been taking place in the Navigator Group as well as the New Hebrides.

I have refrained from addressing you lately on these questions, because I was in hopes that it would be possible for you to be present at the Colonial Conference, where the future of the Pacific Islands is sure to form one of the things that will be most discussed. But, in any case, it would have been useless for me to say much, because in the present dislocated condition of English politics the Imperial Government will say nothing respecting the Pacific Islands that would involve fresh international difficulties, which are crowding upon them on all sides.

Since you were writing, Germany has exchanged, in respect to her portion of the Solomon Islands, the position she held under the Delimitation Agreement of last April, for a definite protectorate, while in the Chamber of Deputies, there are signs not only of the old agitation being renewed in the annexation of the New Hebrides, but of a new one arising from the declaration of a French protectorate over so much of the Solomon Islands as Germany has not taken.

I enclose a short notice of a speech relating to the New Hebrides, made by Monseigneur Freppel, Bishop of Angers, in the Chamber of Deputies, during a debate on French colonial affairs. I have not had time to make a translation, of M. Freppel's speech from the *Journal Officiel* for to-nights mail, but I may be allowed to recommend that you should not attach too much weight to it at present, as no Minister referred to it. I think I might safely say that nothing whatever will be done now until the Colonial Conference meets. Whether anything will be done then, and whether any compromise of the kind you indicate can be attempted, really depends entirely upon the previous question, whether any concerted action at all in regard to these Pacific Islands questions will then be possible between the delegates representing Australasia at the Conference. Of the prospects of such a concert, I confess I am not very sanguine now.

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

I have, &c.,
F. D. BELL.

Enclosure.

[Extract from the *Times*, Monday, 24th January, 1887.]

Paris, 22nd January.

A DEBATE on colonial affairs, in the course of which the subject of the possession of the New Hebrides was brought prominently forward, took place in the Chamber of Deputies to-day.

M. RICHARD WADDINGTON directed attention to the economic and fiscal system prevailing in the French colonies, and urged that in all, and more particularly in Cochin China, customs duties ought to be imposed on foreign imports in order that the commerce of the Mother-country might reap due advantage.

M. DELAPORTE informed the House that a Bill in the sense suggested by M. Waddington was actually in course of preparation.

Monseigneur FREPPEL, Bishop of Angers, then raised the question of the New Hebrides. He insisted that those islands ought to be united with New Caledonia, and said it was due to a mistake that the Hebrides Archipelago was not attached to New Caledonia in 1853. The omission has lately been partially repaired, but the French occupation must be made permanent and definitive. The claims of England and her Australian colonies had no substantial foundation, and the fears of the Australians as to the creation of a penal settlement could be set at rest by a categorical declaration on the part of the French Government. It was incumbent upon France to establish a protectorate over the New Hebrides. Monseigneur Freppel proceeded to urge that a protectorate should likewise be proclaimed over the leeward group of the Society Islands and over the Solomon Islands, and expressed the fear that France might be forestalled by other nations. The Panama Canal would add greatly to the importance of the French possessions in Oceania. In conclusion, the Bishop dwelt on the necessity of keeping a watchful guard over the whole French colonial domain, the importance of which the country would one day appreciate.

THE paradoxical proverb that it is always the unexpected which happens has been verified once again by the course of political events in France. The news which we published on Saturday, that M. Dauphin's amended Budget had been rejected by the Budget Committee by a vote of three to one, is not followed this morning by an announcement that M. Goblet's Ministry or any member of it has resigned. To submit has been the alternative chosen. A Cabinet Council was held on Saturday, and the expected crisis was brought to an end by a surrender on the part of M. Dauphin and his colleagues. The Government accept the proposals of the Budget Committee in the place