

## No. 13.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the PREMIER.

SIR,—

7, Westminster Chambers, London, S.W., 17th June, 1886.

At the last moment before the mail closes I have received your telegram of to-day, telling me of the report having reached you of the French proceedings at the New Hebrides, and desiring me to cable you what was thought of them. I have only had time now to send you a hasty answer, but will soon telegraph further.

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

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

## Enclosures.

The PREMIER to the AGENT-GENERAL.

HEARSAY report French proceedings New Hebrides arrived. Wire opinion regarding them.  
17th June, 1886.

ROBERT STOUT.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the PREMIER.

HEBRIDES.—French landing and hoisting flag created strong sensation, coming so soon after Freycinet assurances. Articles condemning appeared to-day's papers. Too early yet form correct opinion, but at present I think shall only get renewed polite phrases. Will telegraph again soon.

17th June, 1886.

F. D. BELL.

## No. 14.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the PREMIER.

SIR,—

7, Westminster Chambers, London, S.W., 18th June, 1886.

Last night a further statement was made in the House of Commons by the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs upon the New Hebrides question; and I enclose a *Times* report of what took place, together with an article that has appeared in the paper.

Mr. Bryce repeated in the House the substance of what I reported to you yesterday, adding that M. de Freycinet had said it was possible a temporary military post might be established in the group; but that, when Lord Lyons again saw the French Premier on the 14th, the latter repeated in the most positive manner the assurance that France had no designs affecting the political condition of the islands, nor any intention of occupying them, and that if troops had been landed they would be withdrawn as soon as the emergency had passed away.

Mr. Bryce said that no account of the hoisting of the French flag had been received from the commanders of Her Majesty's ships, but that these officers had been directed to send one immediately. In the meanwhile Lord Lyons had been directed to call the immediate attention of the French Government to the hoisting of the tricolour, and to inquire as to the circumstances under which it took place, as well as into the particulars of the alleged massacre of French subjects. Mr. Bryce ended by assuring the House that Her Majesty's Government were "fully sensible of the gravity" of the question.

The French papers received this morning contain the same assurances that no annexation is intended; and it is said in Paris that the troops were not sent in consequence of any orders from France, and that, as to the flag, the troops had simply taken their colours ashore with them as a matter of course, but nothing had been done which would in any sense signify an act of taking possession.

It is singular that great stress is laid in the English Press upon the supposed intention of France to create a new penal settlement at the New Hebrides, while hardly any reference is made to her offer to cease transportation altogether. I shall show, by-and-by, how clearly the offer was understood in that sense at Paris.

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

I have, &amp;c.,

F. D. BELL.

## Enclosures.

[Extract from *The Times*, Friday, 18th June, 1886.]

FRANCE AND THE NEW HEBRIDES.

Sydney, 17th June.

INFORMATION has been received here from Noumea of the return to that place of the French transport "Dives" from the New Hebrides. The troops landed on the islands and hoisted the French flag at Sandwich and Mallicolo. The establishment of military posts has been notified to the Resident at each place irrespective of nationality. The Press of Noumea congratulate the French authorities on having accomplished the annexation of the New Hebrides in defiance of England and her colonies. Confirmation of the above intelligence has been received by the New South Wales Government from the British Consul at Noumea, who has strongly protested against the proceedings of the French.

Paris, 17th June.

With regard to the New Hebrides question, the *Temps* this evening again asserts that the French Government have ordered no act which could give rise to the belief that France had taken possession of the islands. They have only, it says, ordered provisional measures to be taken for the protection of French subjects.

THE NEW HEBRIDES.—(House of Lords, Thursday, 17th June.)

The Marquis of SALISBURY said that, in the absence of the noble Lord the Foreign Secretary, he would give notice that to-morrow he would ask whether the Government could give the House any