

lians not unnaturally fear that they are hankering after the New Hebrides for the purpose of establishing new convict settlements there. This would be intolerable. No one can blame the Australians for protesting with all their strength against any further attempt of France to pollute the young and healthy civilisation of the Southern Hemisphere with the worst dregs of her own criminal population; and, as in the case of the New Hebrides their protest stands on the acknowledged ground of international engagements, they may be excused for pressing it with some urgency. They must be content to bear with such patience as they can command the extension of French influence in such directions as are not covered by international engagements and understandings; but in the case of the New Hebrides they are supported alike by international right repeatedly acknowledged by France and by the strongest considerations of sound colonial policy. We trust, therefore, that the communication which Lord Salisbury expects to receive from M. Waddington will be found to offer a near prospect of an amicable and satisfactory settlement. Lord Salisbury explained that the position of the French Government is that, as soon as satisfactory arrangements can be made by which the police of the islands can be maintained and Europeans preserved from danger of outrage, they would be glad to withdraw their troops. The view of the Australian Colonies probably is that the French Government is less concerned with the police of the islands than themselves, and that, as England is under an obligation not to occupy, so France is under a corresponding obligation to retire, not conditioned by any solicitude for the security of Europeans, other than Frenchmen, resident there. This view seems to us to be not unreasonable, and, though we share to the full Lord Granville's anxiety to avoid causing any feeling or unnecessary excitement between our great neighbours the French and ourselves, we must say that the continued presence of French troops in the New Hebrides would be rightly regarded by our Australian fellow-countrymen with grave apprehension and not a little impatience.

[Extract from the *Times*, Wednesday, 4th May, 1887.]

THE NEW HEBRIDES.

Paris, 3rd May.

THE *Temps* this evening, in an article on the New Hebrides question, declares that there are three solutions possible—namely, the declaration of their absolute independence, a protectorate by one Power or the other, and finally a joint surveillance by France and England over the islands, which would in that case remain independent.

The journal thinks that the third plan will probably be adopted, with, possibly, some slight modifications.

[Extract from the *Standard*, Thursday, 5th May, 1887.]

THE NEW HEBRIDES.

(From our Correspondent.)

Paris, Wednesday night.

THE London correspondent of the *Temps* has had a conversation with Sir Francis Bell, Agent-General in London for New Zealand, and Delegate for that colony at the Colonial Conference. Sir F. Bell commenced by saying he intended to write to the *Temps* relative to the New Hebrides question, but in the meantime he affirmed that he was personally favourable to M. Waddington's proposal. The refusal of that proposal by Australia had, however, rendered everything impossible except the complete independence of the New Hebrides. Sir F. Bell, nevertheless, is reported to have expressed the conviction that, even under that condition, there were things which might be done that would not only be advantageous to France and the English colonies, but would result in strengthening the cordial understanding between France and England. If France would withdraw her convicts from the neighbourhood of Australia, Sir F. Bell is represented as having told the *Temps* correspondent that Australia would, perhaps, be the first to congratulate herself on having the French as neighbours.

[Extract from the *Times*, Friday, 6th May, 1887.]

THE NEW HEBRIDES.

Paris, 5th May.

THE *Temps* this evening publishes a telegram from London of to-day's date stating that it is believed that M. Waddington, the French Ambassador, is about to propose the appointment of an Anglo-French Naval Commission for the protection of the New Hebrides. This proposal would probably be accepted by the English Cabinet as a more logical solution of the question than a joint occupation of the islands by British and French troops.

The Australians on their part, adds the telegram, are apprehensive of the consequences of European complications in Australasia in the event of an outbreak of hostilities, and it is against such a contingency that they wish to protect themselves.

No. 2.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the PREMIER.

SIR,— 7, Westminster Chambers, London, S.W., 6th May, 1887.

No. 1. Since writing to you this morning I asked at the Conference for permission to send out copy of the paper laid before us by the Secretary of State containing the proposals of Her Majesty's Government relating to the New Hebrides. I accordingly enclose copy herewith.

The paper went out to the Governors of the Australasian Colonies in despatches from the Secretary of State by last week's mail.

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

F. D. BELL.