

No. 8.

(No. 62.)

Government House, Wellington,

MY LORD,—

New Zealand, 3rd October, 1881.

Reply.

A-2, No. 13.

I have the honor to enclose the copy of a letter addressed to me by Sir W. Fitzherbert, Speaker of the Legislative Council, forwarding, for transmission to your Lordship, a protest from certain members of that House against the passing of the Railways Construction and Land Bill, 1881.

I also enclose the copy of a memorandum which has been addressed to me by Ministers upon the subject of this protest.

I have, &c.,

J. PRENDERGAST.

The Right Hon. the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

Enclosure 1 in No. 8.

PROTEST.

WE, the undersigned members of the Legislative Council, do hereby protest against the passing of the Railways Construction and Land Bill, 1881, because, under the provisions of this Bill, it is proposed to add materially to the liabilities of the colony before the expiration of the period during which the colony has undertaken to desist from any attempt to negotiate further loans, a course which appears to us to be a breach of faith towards the public creditor.

DE RENZIE BRETT.	W. B. D. MANTELL.
HENRY CHAMBERLIN.	W. ROBINSON.
C. J. PHARAZYN.	W. H. NURSE.
W. REYNOLDS.	W. S. PETER.
MATHEW HOLMES.	W. D. H. BAILLIE.
T. FRASER.	

Enclosure 2 in No. 8.

MEMORANDUM for His EXCELLENCY.

MINISTERS present their respectful compliments to the Administrator of the Government; and return to His Excellency the copy of a protest signed by eleven members of the Legislative Council against the passing of the Railways Construction and Land Bill, 1881.

2. Ministers must express their surprise that such a protest should have been made. When they introduced the Bill they had not forgotten—nor is it probable that the majority in each House of the Legislature forgot—the undertaking which, in 1879, the Loan Agents were authorized to give. That undertaking, given on the 9th December, 1879, was that the Government would “abstain from bringing any further loans on the market for the next three years.”

3. Giving effect to the provisions of the Railways Construction Bill will not involve a breach of that undertaking directly or indirectly. All that can be done under the Act is to make—proportionately to the value of work done—grants of land to private companies formed to construct certain railways approved of by Parliament. The principle of such grants is not new, and Ministers believe that, judiciously applied, it will at the present time be most advantageous to the colony. There is little doubt that, under the Act, railways which the Parliament desires to see made will be constructed by companies, and that those railways will be valuable in themselves as aiding settlement, and also as feeders of existing lines.

Wellington, 5th October, 1881.

H. A. ATKINSON

(In the absence of the Premier).

No. 9.

(No. 72.)

Government House, Wellington,

MY LORD,—

New Zealand, 1st November, 1881.

I have the honor to forward to your Lordship the copy of a memorandum addressed to me by the Premier, Mr. Hall, with respect to the alleged intention of the French Government to establish a protectorate over the Hervey Group.

I have, &c.,

ARTHUR GORDON.

The Right Hon. the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

Enclosure in No. 9.

MEMORANDUM for His EXCELLENCY.

THE Premier presents his respectful compliments to the Governor; and returns to His Excellency certain documents respecting a recent visit of the French war ship “Hugon” to Rarotonga, and statements and threats said to have been used by the captain of that ship.