

1884.
NEW ZEALAND.

CONFEDERATION AND ANNEXATION.

(CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE AGENT-GENERAL.)

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

No. 1.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the PREMIER.

SIR,—

7, Westminster Chambers, London, S.W. June 11, 1883.

I received this morning your telegram mentioning the rumour of an intention on the part of Foreign Powers to take possession of some of the Pacific Islands, and instructing me to urge upon the Imperial Government the necessity of taking prompt measures for averting such a calamity. See A.-10, 1883, No. 3.

The Agents-General of Victoria and New South Wales have received similar instructions from their Governments, and we shall act in concert. Lord Normanby has also telegraphed to Lord Derby to the same effect, and Press telegrams have appeared announcing the united action of the Australasian Governments upon the question.

But there is something which requires just as prompt a decision on your side. I would not accompany the deputation that lately went up to Lord Derby about New Guinea, because I knew very well that the first question the Colonial Office would ask was whether Australia was ready to provide the cost of administering the new dependency if it were created, and I found that the other Agents-General were not authorized to give a definite answer to it. Even now, Mr. Service, in telegraphing on the Pacific Islands question to Mr. Murray Smith, only says that he "thinks" the colonies would contribute to the cost of the measures that must become necessary if your purpose is to be gained. Having no doubt in my own mind that this question of providing the cost of any action we ask the Imperial Government to take, stands at the threshold of the matter, I telegraphed to you, strongly advising an immediate concert being come to between all the Australasian Governments, with a view to enabling definite assurances to be given to Lord Derby by the Agents-General. The day, indeed, has long gone by when there could be any doubt of this being a necessity: nor will either the Imperial Government or public opinion here be capable of being moved, until the colonies have made up their minds on it. It is the manifest destiny of Australasia to have dominion over the Pacific Islands, unless in the meantime the islands are lost to us by our own supineness, in not doing to-day what we shall certainly have to do in the end. But no one could ever persuade the English taxpayer that he ought to pay for it. Our dominion over the Pacific Islands is a necessity, not to the safety of the inhabitants of England, but to our own; and, so long as we put off saying that we are ready to pay for obtaining that safety, so long must we expect the Imperial authority to doubt, to vacillate, and to delay.

I do not say that even with this condition the Imperial Government will be moved, for there are a great number of complicated questions, and demands of other nations, to be dealt with before any decision could be come to; but without it I am convinced that we shall never succeed.

I have, &c.

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

F. D. BELL.

No. 2.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the PREMIER.

SIR,—

7, Westminster Chambers, London, S.W. June 28, 1883.

Lord Derby having appointed to-day for receiving the Agents-General on the Pacific Islands question, we have had a long interview with his Lordship.

The Agents-General for the Australian Colonies had unanimously asked me to undertake the task of opening the question, and presenting the leading points in our case to the Secretary of State. This I accordingly did, to the best of my ability, and the discussion then extended, and was, in fact, led by Lord Derby himself, over a wide range. He seemed to us all to be impressed with the gravity of the representations we made, and said they must receive the consideration of all the Cabinet. For this purpose he desired us to place them fully before him in writing, which we shall do without delay.