

As the statement I am preparing of what passed at the interview must necessarily be carefully examined by the other Agents-General, I think it best not to anticipate it here. I have sent you a cablegram in general terms, and messages to the like purport are being sent to the Australian Governments. I think I may, however, express the opinion that, while there certainly are difficulties of no slight nature before both the Imperial Government and the colonies, and, while Lord Derby is sure to be extremely cautious in coming to any decision, what passed to-day has marked a distinct step, and will lead to a clearer definition of the policy that is to guide England on the question of the Pacific.

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

I have, &c.

F. D. BELL.

No. 3.

The PREMIER to the AGENT-GENERAL.

Government Offices, Wellington, July 14, 1883.

SIR,—

See A.—10A, 1883.

Your telegram of the 20th June, respecting the Pacific Islands annexation question, was received by me on the 21st.

2. An answer was not sent, because it seemed desirable, before replying upon the further conditions which you informed me would be required by the Imperial Government as preliminaries to action, that the results of the pending discussion in the Assembly, should be considered by the Government.

Vol. 44, pp. 189 and 187.

3. You will learn, from the reports in *Hansard*, that the Legislative Council passed resolutions, submitted by the Government, pledging the colony to bear, "in common with the other Colonies of Australasia," "a fair share of the necessary expenses;" and that the feeling of the Council, in favour of the annexation of various groups of Islands, was general and strong.

Hansard, p. 330.

4. I was compelled to state to the Council that I did not quite understand your telegram of the 20th June. The consequent doubt on the part of the Government, as to the nature of the undertaking which you had ascertained would be required by the Imperial Government, strengthened a feeling that, instead of submitting to the House of Representatives a merely declaratory or vague motion, it would be well to ask for the appointment of a Select Committee, so that the conditions to which the colony might fairly consent should be considered and formulated by that body for discussion by the House. The Committee was appointed, and it has met two or three times.

5. The decisions of the Imperial Government as to Queensland's action touching New Guinea, and as to the proposal of Victoria regarding the New Hebrides, have, of course, been telegraphed to New Zealand, and, it must be presumed, will have their effect upon the proceedings of the Committee.

Appendix, 1878, A.—2, No. 21.

6. I need not add to the assurances you will find in *Hansard* as to the opinion of the Government upon the general question of annexation, and the possible effects upon the future of Australasia should some of the groups of islands be occupied by Foreign Powers; but the Government were, from the first, impressed with the belief that the pledge given to France by Great Britain in 1878, must raise difficulties, if it did not interpose a positive bar, to any such action as was proposed regarding the New Hebrides.

7. The report of the Select Committee shall be sent to you as soon as possible after its presentation to the House.

I have, &c.

Sir F. Dillon Bell, K.C.M.G. Agent-General, London.

FRED. WHITAKER.

No. 4.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the PREMIER.

PREMIER, New Zealand.

Pacific Islands. Instruct whether may say you will share cost, like Victoria and rest colonies.

BELL.

London, July 16.

No. 5.

The PREMIER to the AGENT-GENERAL.

AGENT-GENERAL for NEW ZEALAND, London.

Assembly approves Government action Annexation, desires British rule unoccupied islands; but House desires, before increasing taxation, statement Colonial Office, contribution required.

WHITAKER.

Wellington, July 31.

No. 6.

The PREMIER to the AGENT-GENERAL.

SIR,—

Government Offices, Wellington, August 11, 1883.

No. 1.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 169, of June 11th, detailing the steps taken, and those contemplated, by the Agents-General for the Australasian Colonies, respecting the Annexation of Islands in the Pacific, and stating your opinions as to the conditions precedent to action which would be insisted upon by the Imperial Government.

2. By my letter, dated July 14th, I informed you of the resolution on the subject that had been adopted by the Legislative Council, and why it was intended to propose to the House of Representatives to refer the consideration of the subject to a Select Committee.