

which might hereafter accrue from the annexation. At any rate, as at present advised, I could not recommend the Government of this colony to accept any share of such a responsibility. I cannot help thinking that, under existing circumstances, it would be better for the Australasian Colonies to confine their representation to the prevention of annexation by any Foreign Power, until the experiment of colonizing New Guinea, and even of Fiji, shall have been more fully developed.

I have, &c.

Hon. James Service, Premier, Victoria.

W. R. GIBLIN.

No. 3.

The PREMIER, Victoria, to the PREMIER, Tasmania.

SIR,—

Premier's Office, Melbourne, July 11, 1883.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 29th June, in reply to the communications addressed by this Government to that of Tasmania, on the subject of the proposal for the Annexation of, or the establishment of a protectorate over, the New Hebrides and neighbouring islands.

I feel greatly obliged for the frank expression of your views with which you have favoured me; but I am so impressed with the grave, indeed critical, importance of the question for this group of colonies, that I venture to ask you to re-look at the matter, before regarding it as finally disposed of.

As a ground for further consideration, I would point out that the proposal to which assent is asked is not quite of the character objected to in your letter. It is not that the Islands, or either of them, should be attached to any particular colony, in which case I quite concur with you that it would be equitable that the colony should bear the burden of the expense. The measure proposed, however, merely is that Great Britain should take possession of, or establish a protectorate over, the Islands; and, as this would be mainly, if not solely, in the interests of the existing colonies, it seems only just that they should bear the cost, or, at the least, a part of the cost. The amount of this might be apportioned in relation to the population—or the revenue—of each colony, and the burden, thus divided, would be not only small, but, as compared with the advantages, infinitesimal.

I shall be very glad if you will look at the question from this point of view, for the purpose of, if possible, recommending your Cabinet to agree with the other colonies in sharing the expense of the proposed action.

In our future, this question must exercise a considerable influence upon commerce, and it may prove that the matter of naval and military establishments will come to be almost governed by the favourable or adverse possession of these Islands.

On all these grounds I would strongly urge the importance of all the colonies joining in a unanimous utterance on the subject. The question forms a national one for Australasia, and one with regard to which unanimity must greatly augment her dignity and her influence abroad.

I have, &c.

The Hon. the Premier, Hobart.

JAMES SERVICE,
Premier.

No. 4.

The PREMIER, Tasmania, to the PREMIER, Victoria.

SIR,—

Premier's Office, Hobart, July 16, 1883.

See also A.—3,
Appendix D,
p. 74.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 170, of the 11th instant, and of your telegram of the same, as to the New Guinea and Pacific Islands question.

This Government is very desirous to act in harmony with the other colonies in all matters of Australasian concern, and I will therefore willingly bring the matter before the Cabinet for reconsideration, with a view to see how far we can assist the larger colonies, by asking our Parliament (which meets on the 24th instant) to adopt an Address from both Houses, urging Her Majesty's Government to take such steps as may be most effectual to prevent the acquisition of any of the Islands referred to by any Foreign Power, whether those steps involved a protectorate or annexation, or some third course of action.

As to the question of expenses, I presume, in the case of a protectorate, they would be almost nominal; but if Annexation involves the governing, according to English ideas, of a considerable number of islands scattered over vast tracks of ocean, and inhabited by men speaking very various dialects, and of widely-different degrees of civilization, I confess myself unable to even approximate the cost of maintaining law and order on such territories and under such conditions. Nevertheless, as you justly suggest, if the cost were apportioned amongst the Australasian Colonies according to either revenue or population, our share would be but small, as compared to the advantages which might be expected to accrue to the Australasian group.

I have, &c.

The Hon. the Premier, Melbourne.

W. R. GIBLIN.

No. 5.

Governor Sir W. F. D. JERVOIS, G.C.M.G. C.B. to the Right Hon. the Earl of DERBY.

MY LORD,—

Government House, Wellington, August 11, 1883.

No. 1.

With reference to my despatch of the 16th June last, concerning Pacific Islands Annexation, I have the honour to inform your Lordship that the subject is being considered by the