

No. 3.

The FOREIGN OFFICE to the COLONIAL OFFICE.

SIR,—

Foreign Office, August 27, 1883.

No. 2.

I am directed by Earl Granville to transmit to you herewith, for the information of the Earl of Derby, a copy of a despatch which his Lordship has addressed to Her Majesty's Minister at Paris, instructing him to make a representation to the French Government, in the sense suggested in your letter of the 10th instant, respecting the transportation of relapsed criminals from France to New Caledonia.

I am, &c.

The Under-Secretary of State, Colonial Office.

J. PAUNCEFOTE.

Enclosure.

SIR,—

Foreign Office, August 25, 1883. *

I communicated, in due course, to the Colonial Office Lord Lyons's despatch of the 9th of May last, in which His Excellency reported that the Transportation of Relapsed Criminals Bill had passed the first reading in the French Chamber of Deputies, and that New Caledonia and its dependencies were included amongst the settlements to which relapsed criminals are to be sent.

The Earl of Derby has now brought under my notice, in connection with this matter, a joint communication, annexed herewith in copy, which has been addressed to his Lordship by the Agents-General of New South Wales, New Zealand, Queensland, and Victoria, and in which, *inter alia*, very strong representations are made, with a view to the adoption of effective measures for preventing the serious consequences to be anticipated from the above-mentioned resolution of the French Government, by which large numbers of the worst class of criminals would be transported to New Caledonia, where, as it is stated, they would be free. And, with further reference to this subject, his Lordship has received from the Agent-General of Queensland a letter, of which copy is also enclosed for your information, and which forwards a telegram from the Premier of the colony, calling attention to the refusal of the French authorities of New Caledonia to apply for the extradition of criminals who escape from Noumea into Queensland.

It is clear that this question, being one which gravely concerns the welfare of the Australian Colonies, must command the prompt attention of Her Majesty's Government, and I have accordingly to request that you will lose no time in placing yourself in communication with the French Government upon the subject, with a view to ascertain what is the course which they propose to pursue—in the first place, as regards the number of convicts to be sent out to the Western Pacific, and as to the position of such criminals after arrival; and, secondly, with respect to the failure of the Government of New Caledonia to demand the extradition of criminals whom they have permitted to escape, in the cases pointed out in the above-mentioned telegram from the Queensland Government.

I am, &c.

The Hon. F. Plunkett.

GRANVILLE.

No. 4.

The FOREIGN OFFICE to the COLONIAL OFFICE.

SIR,—

Foreign Office, September 5, 1883.

With reference to my letter of the 27th ultimo, I am directed by Earl Granville to transmit to you herewith, for the information of the Earl of Derby, copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Minister at Paris, enclosing copy of a note verbale which he has left with the French Government, respecting the proposed transportation of habitual criminals from France to New Caledonia.

I am, &c.

The Under-Secretary of State, Colonial Office.

T. V. LISTER.

Enclosure in No. 4.

MY LORD,—

Paris, August 31, 1883.

On receipt of your Lordship's despatch of the 25th instant, I drew up the memorandum, copy of which I have the honour to enclose, explanatory of the anxiety felt in the Australian Colonies as to the serious consequences which the proposed French law for the "transportation of relapsed criminals" to New Caledonia may entail. My intention was to speak to M. Challemel Lacour in the sense of your Lordship's instructions, and to leave the memorandum with His Excellency only as a semi-official document. I found, however, on calling at the Foreign Department this afternoon, that M. Challemel Lacour, who has been in poor health for some days past, has suddenly become so much worse that he is about to proceed at once to Vichy, and at that moment he was in conference with the President of the Council, arranging the temporary transfer of his duties to the latter. I therefore placed the memorandum in the hands of M. Marcel, the Chef de Cabinet of M. Challemel Lacour, and begged him to submit it to the Minister for Foreign Affairs in my name. M. Marcel promised to call the attention of the Minister as soon as possible to the failure of the Government of New Caledonia to apply for the extradition of the three persons who had escaped from Noumea, as reported in the telegram from the Governor of Queensland, of the 26th ultimo.

I have, &c.

The Earl Granville, K.G.

F. R. PLUNKETT.