

at the same time I expressed, on behalf of Her Majesty's Government, a strong hope that the position of the British possessions in relation to New Caledonia would be considered, and that the Bill would not be applied to that French colony.

I have now received instructions to submit to your Excellency a further representation on this important subject. Her Majesty's Government understand your Excellency's note to intimate that, even if the Bill should become law in its present shape, the French Government would have discretion as to sending *récidivistes* to New Caledonia and its dependencies; and they very earnestly desire to obtain the means of allaying the constantly-increasing apprehensions of the British colonists, by receiving from the French Government an assurance that these criminals will not be sent to New Caledonia, but rather to the other places named in the Bill.

Her Majesty's Government have learnt with satisfaction, from your Excellency's note, that instructions have been given to the Governor of New Caledonia to continue to apply to the Colonial Governments of Australia for the extradition of fugitive convicts, and they beg the French Government to accept their thanks for sending these instructions.

That there is strong foundation for the alarm felt in the colonies is shown by a report which Her Majesty's Government have received from the Governor of New South Wales, to the effect that 247 fugitive convicts from New Caledonia have landed since 1873. Her Majesty's Government desire to direct the special attention of the French Government to the very serious extent to which the escape of criminals is thus shown to have taken place during the last ten years.

In conclusion, I will ask your Excellency's permission once more to recommend most earnestly to the friendly consideration of the French Government, the representations which I have, on this and on previous occasions, had the honour to make to them on a matter which has excited intense feeling in Her Majesty's Australian Colonies, and to which Her Majesty's Government attach very serious importance.

His Excellency M. Jules Ferry.

I have, &c.

LYONS.

### No. 23.

The AGENT-GENERAL for VICTORIA to the COLONIAL OFFICE.

8, Victoria Chambers, Victoria Street, Westminster, S.W.

MY LORD,—

January 11, 1884.

I trust I may not be considered importunate in requesting your attention to my letter of the 29th of November of last year, in which I applied, on behalf of my Government, for information No. 9. as to the nature of the answer of the French Government to the representations which Her Majesty's Embassy at Paris were instructed in last August to make on the subject of the French Relapsing Convicts Transportation Bill, and concerning which your Lordship then declared that it was necessary to obtain immediate explanations from the Government of the republic. The length of time which has elapsed since Her Majesty's Embassy were instructed to act, and even since the papers containing their instructions were published; the fact that the French Government have not only not withdrawn the Bill from the consideration of the Senate, but have, as I am informed, chartered a new special line of steamers from Havre to Noumea, the better to give effect to its provisions; the serious anxiety to which the discussions in the French Legislature, and the conduct of the Government of New Caledonia in regard to recently-escaped convicts, have given cause throughout the Australian Colonies, and the necessity which is felt for the adoption, in good time, of common measures of legislative self-protection upon their part: all these considerations may, I trust, justify me in requesting your Lordship to bring the subject, with as little delay as may be, again under the consideration of Her Majesty's Government.

I have, &c.

The Right Hon. the Earl of Derby.

ROBT. MURRAY SMITH.

### No. 24.

The COLONIAL OFFICE to the AGENT-GENERAL for VICTORIA.

SIR,—

Downing Street, January 18, 1884.

I am directed by the Earl of Derby to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 11th instant, respecting the Relapsed Criminals Bill which has been passed by the French Chamber of Deputies.

I am to state that Her Majesty's Government have not lost sight of this important question, and are in communication with the French Government on the subject.

The correspondence, as far as it is then completed, will be presented to Parliament as soon as it assembles.

I am, &c.

The Agent-General for Victoria.

JOHN BRAMSTON.

### No. 25.

The FOREIGN OFFICE to the COLONIAL OFFICE.

SIR,—

Foreign Office, January 22, 1884.

I am directed by Lord Granville to transmit to you herewith, to be laid before Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies, copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Ambassador at Paris, reporting the language held by him to Monsieur Jules Ferry upon the subject of the Relapsed Criminals Bill, and its proposed application to New Caledonia. I am to add that His Excellency has been informed that his language is entirely approved by Her Majesty's Government.

I am, &c.

The Under-Secretary of State, Colonial Office.

J. PAUNCEFOTE.