

I am now to state that Lord Derby proposes, with the concurrence of Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies, to inform the French Ambassador, in reply to His Excellency's communication, that Her Majesty's Government have no intention of proposing any measures to Parliament with a view of changing the condition of independence which the New Hebrides Islands now enjoy.

The Under Secretary of State, Colonial Office.

I am, &c.,

T. V. LISTER.

The Marquis d'Harcourt to The Earl of Derby.

M. le Comte,

Ambassade de France, le 18 Janvier, 1878.

Il s'est établi entre l'île de la Nouvelle Calédonie et le groupe des Nouvelles Hébrides des rapports d'ordre commercial qui se sont rapidement développés, en raison de leur voisinage et qui présentent pour la prospérité de notre établissement Colonial une importance considérable.

Mon Gouvernement, qui attache beaucoup de prix à ce que ces relations continuent sur le même pied, se préoccupe dans une certaine mesure d'un mouvement d'opinion qui se serait produit en Australie dans ce dernier temps. Les journaux de ce pays auraient dénoué l'intention qu'ils attribuent à la France de réunir les Nouvelles Hébrides à ses possessions et demanderaient qu'afin de prévenir cette éventualité l'Archipel dont il s'agit fût placé sous la souveraineté de la Couronne d'Angleterre.

Sans attacher à ce mouvement de l'opinion une très-grande importance, mon Gouvernement tient toutefois à déclarer que pour ce qui le concerne il n'a pas le projet de porter atteinte à l'indépendance des Nouvelles Hébrides, et il serait heureux de savoir que de son côté le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté est également disposé à en respecter.

Veillez, &c.,

D'HARCOURT.

Son Excellence Le Comte de Derby,

&c., &c., &c.

The Colonial Office to The Foreign Office.

Sir,

Downing-st., 20 February, 1878.

In reply to your letter of the 1st instant, I am directed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to acquaint you that he concurs in the terms of the reply which the Earl of Derby proposes to give to the inquiry of the French Ambassador at this Court, with reference to the intentions of Her Majesty's Government in respect of the New Hebrides Group.

I am, &c.,

The Under Secretary of State, Foreign Office.

W. R. MALCOLM.

He had also ascertained by reference to the proceedings of the House of Commons, Hansard, vol. cclxxviii p. 898, that on 23rd April, 1883, it was officially announced, in answer to a question put to the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, that the understanding between France and England that neither Government would take possession of the New Hebrides still continued in force. He also referred to the proceedings in the House of Commons concerning the Islands of the Pacific and the Treaty of 1847, contained in Hansard, vol. cclxxiii p. 1518; and read the following question and answer, of date August 11th, 1882.

ENGLAND AND FRANCE—THE ISLANDS OF THE PACIFIC—TREATY OF 1847.

MR. SALT asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether any action has been taken on the part of France in contravention of Articles 1 and 2 of the Treaty of 19th June, 1847, between Great Britain and France, guaranteeing the absolute independence of certain Islands in the Pacific.

SIR CHARLES W. DILKE: The French flag was hoisted at Raiatea, an island to the leeward of Tahiti, shortly before Her Majesty's Government assumed office, and a provisional protectorate assumed over it by the French authorities at Tahiti, at the solicitation of the Chiefs of the Island; but the proceeding was disavowed by the French Government, as an infraction of the Declaration of June 19, 1847. The French Government, however, opened negotiations for the abrogation of the Declaration, in consideration of adequate concessions on their part in connection with other pending questions; and Her Majesty's Government have consented that the French flag shall remain provisionally hoisted at Raiatea until the 31st of December next, when, unless otherwise agreed between the two Governments, the *status quo ante* under the Declaration of 1847 will be reverted to.

He also quoted the declaration of the Plenipotentiaries of Great Britain and France acknowledging the independence of the Islands of Huahine, Raiatea, and Borabora, and of the small islands adjacent thereto, in the Pacific Ocean, to be found in Hertzslet's Treaties, Vol. VIII, pp. 998 and 999.

DECLARATION of the Plenipotentiaries of Great Britain and France, acknowledging the Independence of the Islands of Huahine, Raiatea, and Borabora, and of the small Islands adjacent thereto, in the Pacific Ocean. London, June 19, 1847.

HER Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and His Majesty the King of the French, being desirous of removing a cause of discussion between their respective Governments, relative to the islands in the Pacific Ocean which are hereinafter designated, have thought proper reciprocally to engage:—

1. Formally to acknowledge the independence of the Islands of Huahine, Raiatea, and Borabora, (to the leeward of Tahiti), and of the small islands adjacent to and dependent upon those islands.
- 2.