

contains renewed representations on the subject of the Habitual Criminals Bill, now before the French Legislature; and I have to request that your Excellency will, in the manner you think most judicious, make an urgent appeal to the French Government, in the sense suggested, in order to bring about an understanding with Her Majesty's Government, both in the interests of the Australian Colonies and for the better preservation of peace and order in the Pacific, that New Caledonia shall not be chosen as one of the places of transportation under the Bill.

His Excellency Viscount Lyons, G.C.B., &c.

I have, &c.,
GRANVILLE.

Enclosure No. 3.

[The Times, Saturday, 21st March, 1885.]

Paris, 20th March.

THE Committee on the *Récidivistes* Bill agreed to-day to the Senatorial amendments except those relating to the specifying of the localities, conditions of labour, and police supervision. On these points it will confer with the Ministers of the Interior and Marine, and it will not report until after the Easter recess.

Enclosure No. 4.

[The Times, Saturday, 26th March, 1885.]

The French Récidivistes Bill.

Paris, 25th March.

THE Committee on the *Récidivistes* Bill has adopted the measure in the form voted by the Senate.

M. Waldeck-Rousseau, conferring to-day with the *Récidivistes* Bill Committee, intimated that the worst class of convicts would be sent to Cayenne, while others would be sent to colonies in want of workmen, or in which their aptitudes or handicrafts would render them useful.

No. 15.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the PREMIER.

SIR,—

7, Westminster Chambers, London, S.W., 9th April, 1885.

I transmit herewith a letter from the Colonial Office, enclosing one from the Foreign Office covering a despatch from Her Majesty's Ambassador at Paris, with the account of a conversation between himself and M. Jules Ferry, on the 18th March, on the subject of the *Récidiviste* Bill.

You will perceive with regret that, notwithstanding the renewed remonstrances of Lord Lyons, the French Minister declared that his Government could not abdicate freedom of action with regard to a French colony by any engagement with a foreign Power.

The Bill was brought down from the Senate to the Chamber of Deputies by the Minister of the Interior (M. Waldeck-Rousseau) on the 17th March.

A Committee had been appointed by the Chamber to report upon the Bill, and on the 19th this Committee adopted the four first clauses as amended by the Senate. They had, in fact, practically made up their minds to accept all the Senate amendments, on the ground that the measure ought to be passed before the dissolution, which must soon take place.

On the 21st March the Committee sat again, and decided to examine the Government upon these two points: First, the Chamber had decided that the *récidivistes* should be free on arrival, whereas the Senate now desired that they should be constrained to labour; the Committee wanted to know by what means the Senate's decision was to be carried out. Second, the Chamber had decided that only free pardon could put an end to relegation, whereas the Senate now proposed that, after six years, a colonial tribunal might remit the sentence; the Committee wanted to know exactly how this would be regulated.

At the same sitting the Committee expressed the desire that New Caledonia should be chosen as the place of relegation instead of Guiana. On the 26th March the Committee heard M. Waldeck-Rousseau, who was accompanied by M. Larose (formerly a member of the Committee, but now Under-Secretary for the Interior) and by M. Herbette (Director of Penal Services).

As to place of relegation, the *récidivistes* would first be interned in French penitentiaries, and then be divided into three classes: (a.) Criminals condemned for light offences, and capable of following their trades in the colony. These would be sent to colonies which asked for them, and their position as *relégués* would not be divulged. (b.) *Récidivistes* possessing no resources. These would be specially relegated to Guiana and New Caledonia, where they would be brigaded and employed by the State on public works. (c.) *Récidivistes* who, having belonged to the preceding class, created for themselves some personal resources in the colony, or were engaged by private employers; these would not be brigaded at all.

Upon hearing these explanations from the Minister, the Committee determined to adopt all the Senate amendments in the Bill. They further decided that the business of relegation as well as transportation, hitherto attached to the Ministry of Marine and Colonies, should be transferred to the Ministry of the Interior.

M. Gerville-Réache was then ordered to draw up the report, which was adopted by the Committee on the 28th March, and brought up to the Senate on the 29th.

I have sent to Paris for copies of the report, and as soon as I receive them will make a *précis* thereof, as I did in the case of the previous reports.

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

I have, &c.,
F. D. BELL.