

1885.

NEW ZEALAND.

PROPOSED ACQUISITION OF NEW HEBRIDES
BY FRANCE

(PAPERS RELATING TO THE).

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

No. 1.

The PREMIER to the AGENT-GENERAL.

SIR,— Premier's Office, Wellington, 29th January, 1885.
On the receipt of your letter of the 19th November last, on the 5th instant, I at once *Confidential* wired to you the views of the Cabinet, which were that we protested against France acquiring the *not printed.* New Hebrides, which have always been considered as belonging to New Zealand, and consequently a portion of the British Empire.

2. The New Hebrides have been the seat of the Presbyterian Missions from Australia, Canada, Scotland, and New Zealand, for many years, and anything done towards the civilization of the natives has been done by British people. The Australian Colonies and New Zealand feel very strongly on the subject, and I feel sure they will never give their consent to handing over these islands to the French.

I may add that, from telegrams received from Victoria, the people there are as strongly against the proposal as we are.

3. Regarding the other part of your letter on the subject of *récidivistes*, I have to express the thanks of the Government to yourself and the other Agents-General for the trouble they have taken in keeping the undesirability of any more convicts being sent to the Pacific steadily before Lord Derby.

I have, &c.,

ROBERT STOUT.

Sir F. D. Bell, K.C.M.G.,
Agent-General for New Zealand, London.

No. 2.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the PREMIER.

SIR,— 7, Westminster Chambers, London, S.W., 21st February, 1885.

You may perhaps remember that in more than one letter to you I have referred to the importation of native labour from the New Hebrides into New Caledonia.

In a speech addressed by the Under-Secretary for the French Colonies to the Conseil Supérieur des Colonies ten days ago, he mentioned that the renewal of immigration of native labour from the New Hebrides had furnished the penal settlement with the labour it required for the development of its industries; but that these operations had only been authorized by the French Government on condition of their not losing the character of free contract, and that the first infraction of the dictates of humanity would be the signal for an immediate prohibition of any recruiting.

The operations of the Compagnie Française des Nouvelles Hébrides are again attracting attention at Paris. The *Économiste Française* said, a week ago, that news had come from the New Hebrides of the company having had a general meeting, at which it was resolved that they should complete their acquisitions of territory so as to occupy all the important points in the islands; that with this object the directors were authorized to double the capital; and that the company was thoroughly determined (*absolument déterminée*) to dominate all the foreign commercial stations in the group, to elbow them out, and by that means to compel the annexation of the islands by France.

I have, &c.,

F. D. BELL

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.