

1886.
NEW ZEALAND.

PROPOSED ACQUISITION OF NEW HEBRIDES BY FRANCE

(FURTHER PAPERS RELATING TO THE).

[In Continuation of A.—5A, 1886.]

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

No. 55.

The SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES to the GOVERNOR.

SIR,—

Downing Street, 22nd April, 1886.

I have the honour to transmit to you, for your information and that of your Government, a copy of a letter which I have caused to be addressed to the Agents-General for the Australasian Colonies respecting the negotiations between Her Majesty's Government and the French Government with regard to the New Hebrides.

Governor Sir W. F. D. Jervois, G.C.M.G., C.B., &c.

I have, &c.,
GRANVILLE.

Enclosure.

The COLONIAL OFFICE to the AGENTS-GENERAL for the AUSTRALASIAN COLONIES.

SIR,—

Downing Street, 22nd April, 1886.

I am directed by Earl Granville to inform you that he has under his careful consideration the expressions of opinion which have been communicated to him by some of the Australian Governments upon the proposal which has been made to Her Majesty's Government by the French Government respecting the New Hebrides, and that his Lordship desires that you should understand the reasons for which Her Majesty's Government has thought it desirable, in the interests of the Australasian Colonies, that this proposal should be fully considered.

The French Government have explained that a further supply of labour must be provided for their islands in the Western Pacific, and that for this purpose they must send out further convicts, unless they can secure the necessary labour by acquiring the New Hebrides. If this were agreed to, the French Government would not only abstain from sending forward the convicts which they are preparing to send, but would cease at once, and permanently, to transport convicts to the Western Pacific. The result which the colonists have very strongly and repeatedly urged Her Majesty's Government to secure, as being of the highest importance to the welfare of Australasia, can thus be now attained.

I am to enclose a note from M. Waddington, which shows the objects and intentions of the French Government in this matter.

You will no doubt readily understand that, in the event of Her Majesty's Government rejecting, at the instance of some of the Australian Governments, this offer to discontinue transportation, especially if that offer should be accompanied, as the Government of New Zealand, supported by that of New South Wales, urges that it should be, by an offer of the cession of Rapa, the position of Her Majesty's Government in pressing hereafter the objections of the colonies to the transportation of convicts to French soil would be much weakened.

I am also to observe that, as the French Government will certainly not consent to the establishment of the authority of any other Power in the New Hebrides, which form a part of the same geographical group with New Caledonia and the Loyalty Islands, and in which French enterprise has made considerable progress, there is little chance of such a modification of the existing agreement so as to insure the New Hebrides becoming a British possession; and that if satisfactory facilities for trade and adequate securities for religious freedom can be obtained, as well as the total cessation of the transportation of convicts by France to the Pacific, together with the cession of Rapa, such an arrangement would seem to be to the advantage of the Australasian Colonies.

A copy of this letter will be forwarded to the Governors of the Australasian Colonies by the next mail.

The Agents-General for the Australasian Colonies.

I have, &c.,
J. BRAMSTON.