

No. 9.

The PREMIER to the SOUTHLAND PRESBYTERY.

REVEREND SIR,—

1st June, 1886.

I have been desired by the Hon. the Premier to acknowledge the receipt of the motion of the Southland Presbytery relating to the proposed annexation of the New Hebrides by France, passed on the 2nd instant.

The Rev. A. Bethune, Presbytery Clerk, Invercargill.

I have, &c.,

ALEX. WILLIS.

No. 10.

The PREMIER, Queensland, to the PREMIER, New Zealand.

SIR,—

Colonial Secretary's Office, Brisbane, 10th June, 1886.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 8th ultimo, enclosing A.—5A, 1886, copies of a letter addressed by you to the Moderator of the Assembly and the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand concerning the New Hebrides, and the attitude of the Presbyterian Church towards the proposed arrangement between England and France.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Premier of New Zealand, Wellington.

S. W. GRIFFITH.

No. 11.

Lord CARRINGTON to His Excellency Sir W. F. D. JERVOIS, G.C.M.G., C.B.

SIR,—

Sydney, 15th June, 1886.

I have the honour to forward to your Excellency a copy of a letter that I have received from the Acting-Consul at Noumea, informing me, upon good authority, that the French flag was formally hoisted on the Islands of Mallicolo and Sandwich, under a salute from the "Dives."

I have, &c.,

His Excellency Sir William Jervois, R.E., G.C.M.G., &c.

CARRINGTON.

Enclosure.

The ACTING BRITISH CONSUL, Noumea, to the GOVERNOR, New South Wales.

MY LORD,—

British Consulate, Noumea, 10th June, 1886.

In continuation of my despatch under date 31st ultimo, I now have the honour to inform you that the "Dives" returned from the New Hebrides yesterday afternoon, and, though the Government have refused to give any information until after the departure of the mail steamer this morning, I have been told upon good authority that the French flag was formally hoisted on the Islands of Mallicolo and Sandwich, under a salute from the "Dives." The "Magellan" left this harbour on the 1st instant with another company of infantry, also a detachment of artillery with four guns, and eighty rounds of ammunition for each. I enclose local newspaper. I at once handed a formal protest to the Acting-Governor, also a copy of the agreement of 1878.

I trust that your Excellency will telegraph to the Foreign Office that I have protested against the annexation, and also inform me of date of receipt of this despatch, in case of the local post office having "accidentally delayed" it.

I have, &c.,

LEO. LAYARD, Acting-Consul.

No. 12.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the PREMIER.

SIR,—

7, Westminster Chambers, London, S.W., 17th June, 1886.

On the 8th instant Lord Carrington telegraphed to Her Majesty's Government that he had received a despatch from the British Consul at Noumea, notifying the departure of two French war-vessels, with the object, it was said, of occupying the New Hebrides; that these vessels had on board building-material and a three months' supply of provisions; and that their departure had been kept secret, the harbour and consulate being watched to prevent the Consul from taking any steps to frustrate the French.

Two days after, the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs announced this intelligence in the House of Commons, stating that Lord Rosebery had thereupon communicated with the French Ambassador, who knew nothing of the report, and did not believe it, because His Excellency had only been told by his Government that two small vessels had been sent to the group about the murder of French subjects there; but that Her Majesty's Ambassador at Paris had been directed by telegraph to call the attention of the French Government to the matter. Mr. Bryce added that Her Majesty's Government could have no doubt as to the engagement between both countries to respect the independence of the group being loyally observed by France.

The French Government having thus been invited to give explanations, M. de Freycinet told Lord Lyons that the natives had recently massacred some of the Frenchmen in the employment of the "French company," and that the rest had called upon the company either to remove them or provide for their security, whereupon the company had applied for protection to the Governor of New Caledonia, who had sent two vessels with troops to the localities where French subjects were in danger, with instructions, if necessary, to land the troops and keep them there until the danger was past and tranquility restored. M. de Freycinet, however, added that these measures had no political significance, and involved no question whatever of annexation, the French Government not proposing to depart from the obligations contracted by them in regard to the group.