

No. 30.

The PREMIER to the AGENT-GENERAL.

SIR,—

Premier's Office, Wellington, 7th October, 1886.

I have not communicated with you in reference to the New Hebrides since forwarding you No. 23. the resolutions passed by the Legislative Council on the subject.

I gather from the telegrams in the newspapers that there seems to be a desire on the part of France to remain in possession of the New Hebrides and at the same time to keep sending *récidivistes* to the Isle of Pines. I need not point out to you that such conduct is very distasteful, not only to the Australians but to the New Zealand colonists. The views of the House of Representatives and the Legislative Council you will have learned from the resolutions. What we desire specially to see is, if possible, that no fresh territory shall be acquired by foreign nations in the Pacific. We are also desirous of seeing none of the criminal offscourings of any European nation being landed near our shores. As far as we can see at this distance there seems great difficulty in any fair compromise being arrived at between France and England. Some of the colonies, as you are aware, will listen to no compromise, and that no doubt prevents the Imperial Government coming to some earlier arrangement with France.

I only write this letter to remind you that we are still anxious to see some proper arrangement come to. Of course what would be pleasing to us would be that the New Hebrides group should not belong to France, but if it cannot be obtained by England it should be internationalized.

I have, &c.,

Sir F. Dillon Bell, K.C.M.G., C.B., Agent-General.

ROBERT STOUT.

No. 31.

The SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES to His Excellency the GOVERNOR.

FRENCH Government recently renewed assurance will maintain engagements with England as to New Hebrides. Despatch follows by mail.

20th October, 1886.

No. 32.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the PREMIER.

SIR,—

7, Westminster Chambers, London, S.W., 19th November, 1886.

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 7th October relating to the New No. 30. Hebrides, and am much obliged by the statement of the views held by the Government.

I expected to have been able to send you a letter on the subject by this mail, but am obliged to content myself to-day by merely transmitting copies of two letters I have received from the Colonial Office, as to which I beg leave to call your attention to the paragraph (in the second of the letters) stating that the papers are communicated in confidence, and must not be published.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

F. D. BELL.

Enclosure 1.

The COLONIAL OFFICE to the AGENT-GENERAL.

SIR,—

Downing Street, 6th November, 1886.

With reference to previous correspondence I am directed by Mr. Secretary Stanhope to transmit to you the accompanying extracts from the *Indépendant de la Nouvelle-Calédonie* of the 24th June last, containing a petition addressed by French residents in New Caledonia to the Governor of the colony in favour of the annexation of the New Hebrides to France.

Her Majesty's Government, on learning the existence of this petition, instructed Mr. Egerton to call the attention of the French Government to the fact that it ignored the obligations of the latter Government with regard to the group of islands in question, and to point out that much injury was likely to be caused by the publication of such a petition without any explanation that it could not be entertained. In reply M. de Freycinet has stated that he has declared, and he repeated the declaration, that he would maintain the engagements made with Her Majesty's Government with respect to these islands, but that he had no control over what the newspapers might say or do.

I have, &c.,

The Agent-General for New Zealand.

JOHN BRAMSTON.

Sub-Enclosure.

[EXTRACTS from *L'Indépendant de la Nouvelle-Calédonie* of 24th June, 1886.]

Nous reproduisons ci-dessous la pétition adressée au Gouverneur de la Nouvelle-Calédonie au sujet des Nouvelles-Hébrides.

Nous faisons appel, à ce sujet, au patriotisme de tous ceux qui désirent la grandeur et la prospérité de la France, en leur recommandant de donner leur signature à cette pétition. Nous nous adressons, non seulement aux lecteurs de *L'Indépendant*, mais à tous nos compatriotes, sans distinction de parti. Il s'agit ici d'une œuvre nationale, devant laquelle la politique doit s'effacer. Restons fidèles à nos opinions, mais soyons Français avant tout.

Il faut que cette pétition soit couverte de signatures et devienne, de cette manière, une manifestation éclatante de la population Calédonienne. Des exemplaires seront expédiés dans l'intérieur