

1887.  
NEW ZEALAND.

# PROPOSED ACQUISITION OF NEW HEBRIDES BY FRANCE

(PAPERS RELATING TO THE).

[In Continuation of A.—5C, 1886.]

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

## No. 1.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the PREMIER.

SIR,—

7, Westminster Chambers, London, S.W., 23rd April, 1886.

Late last evening, and when it was not possible to save the San Francisco mail, I received the enclosed letter from the Colonial Office on the New Hebrides question.

The despatch which Earl Granville is sending to the Australasian Governors can hardly be mistaken. I look upon it as the first public step towards the announcement—which is sure to come—of the New Hebrides being ceded to France; and I am so sure of what it really means that I have thought it my duty to send you a telegram at once asking whether, having regard to the attitude of New South Wales, it could not be arranged that Sir Saul Samuel and myself should be authorized to act in concert upon the New Hebrides question on the lines which Her Majesty's Government understand both your Governments to have now sanctioned.

The indispensable conditions of any assent by the colonies to a cession of the islands to France have always been these: (1) Immediate and total abolition of transportation throughout the Pacific region; (2) Equal trade facilities for British subjects; (3) Adequate security for religious freedom and the protection of the Protestant missions; (4) The cession of Rapa; and to these I now add (5) The annexation of Rarotonga.

I really think these objects can now be attained. I believe them to transcend by far a barren adherence to an engagement which is now *effete*, and is destined in any case to be given up; and I can only hope that your reply to my telegram will be a permission to do what alone is capable now of attaining them.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

F. D. BELL.

## Enclosure.

The COLONIAL OFFICE to the AGENT-GENERAL.

SIR,—

Colonial Office, Downing Street, 22nd April, 1886.

I am directed by Earl Granville to inform you that he has had 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 colonies 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 Mr. 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 security 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 Agent-General for New Zealand.

I have, &c.,

JOHN BRAMSTON.

## No. 2.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the PREMIER.

To Premier, New Zealand.

HEBRIDES.—Lord Granville sending despatch Governors favour accepting French offer. I believe attitude Sydney hastening decision. Can you manage with Sydney that Samuel myself act together, provided following objects attained: Firstly, immediate abolition convictism throughout Pacific; secondly, equal trading rights like Raiatea: thirdly, adequate safeguards, religious freedom, and protection missions; fourthly, Rapa ceded; fifthly, Raratonga annexed.

23rd April, 1886.

F. D. BELL.

## No. 3.

The PREMIER to the AGENT-GENERAL.

NEW HEBRIDES.—Must defer answering telegram few days. Consulting Presbyterians try and obtain consent.

27th April, 1886.

ROBERT STOUT.

## No. 4.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the PREMIER.

Sir,—

7, Westminster Chambers, London, S.W., 30th April, 1886.

By some accident the letter from the Colonial Office to the Agents-General on the New Hebrides question, copy of which I sent you on the 23rd instant, was sent to me without the communication from the French Ambassador, to which it referred. The omission was supplied a day or two afterwards, and I now enclose copy of M. Waddington's note.

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

F. D. BELL.

## Enclosure.

M. WADDINGTON to the Earl of ROSEBURY.

MONSIEUR LE COMTE,—

Le 6 Mars, 1886.

J'ai été heureux de pouvoir vous annoncer, dans notre entretien d'hier, que mon Gouvernement, par déférence pour l'opinion que vous aviez émise, et qui emprunte à la connaissance approfondie de l'Australie que possède votre seigneurie une valeur particulière, et aussi dans le but de faciliter la négociation au sujet des Nouvelles-Hébrides, d'ajourner l'expédition des récidivistes à l'Île des Pins jusqu'à la réception des réponses des colonies australiennes. Votre Excellence a bien voulu se montrer satisfaite de cette résolution, qui répondait au désir du Gouvernement de la Reine. Je n'ai pas marqué, ainsi que vous me l'avez demandé, de transmettre tous vos remerciements à Monsieur de Freycinet.

Poursuivant mon entretien avec votre Excellence, j'ai fait ressortir que nous ne pouvions transporter les récidivistes sur d'autres points que la Nouvelles-Calédonie, faute d'installations appropriées; et que les Chambres françaises n'accorderaient certainement pas les crédits nécessaires pour la construction d'établissements de cette nature, si la libre possession des Nouvelles Hébrides n'était préalablement assurée au Gouvernement de la République. J'ai exposé, en outre, que l'exécution de la loi sur les récidivistes s'imposait chaque jour davantage, et que nous ne pourrions que bien difficilement différer l'envoi projeté au delà de la fin d'Avril.

J'ai alors passé en revue avec V.S. les divers éléments de la question, en insistant surtout sur les trois points suivants: (1.) La Nouvelle-Calédonie a besoin de colons et de travailleurs, et nous espérons que les récidivistes en fourniront une certaine quantité. Si cette ressource est supprimée, il n'y a que les Nouvelles-Hébrides qui puissent donner des travailleurs en nombre suffisant. (2.) Les Australiens n'ont pas besoin de nouveaux territoires, tandis qu'ils désirent obtenir une garantie contre l'infiltration des criminels étrangers chez eux. (3.) Pour une grande puissance c'est toujours chose grave que d'aliéner une portion, si petite qu'elle soit, de ses droits souverains; et

en consentant à ce sacrifice nous ferions une grande concession, dans le but de conserver et de développer les bonnes relations entre l'Australie et nos colonies du Pacifique.

Votre Excellence a bien voulu me dire, à la fin de notre entretien, qu'on avait déjà télégraphié en Australie pour hâter l'envoi des réponses attendues; et nous sommes tombés d'accord pour reprendre les négociations dès qu'elles nous seraient connues.

Veillez, &c.,

M. le Comte de Rosebery.

WADDINGTON.

### No. 5.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the PREMIER.

SIR,—

7, Westminster Chambers, London, S.W., 6th May, 1886.

Lord Granville's letter to the Agents-General, covering the French Ambassador's note on the question of the New Hebrides, seemed to me to take that question so clearly into the phase which I have long felt sure it would assume, that I thought it necessary you should know as soon as possible what had happened; and I telegraphed to you on the 23rd April that a despatch was going to the Governors of the Australasian Colonies in favour of accepting the Ambassador's proposals.

There can be little doubt that this somewhat sudden advance in the question was owing to the attitude taken by the Government of New South Wales. It had become evident that the Governments of that colony and of Victoria would be as much at issue about the New Hebrides as they had been about the Federal Council, and that Her Majesty's Government might rely upon the support of New South Wales in coming to a settlement with France. But it was important for Lord Rosebery and Lord Granville to know whether they would also receive the support of New Zealand, or whether your Government would throw its weight into the scale of Victoria and the Federal Council. Her Majesty's Government had interpreted Governor Sir W. Jervois's telegram of the 18th March as indicating the probability of your support being given if Rapa were ceded; and, for my own part, following the same general principle which has guided me throughout, I had continued to press upon the Colonial Office, in confidential intercourse, the necessity of embracing in any arrangement not only the cession of Rapa by France, but the annexation of Rarotonga by England. Now, in this view it was very important that the Governments of New Zealand and New South Wales should, if possible, be pursuing the same policy, and that their Agents here should be enabled to work together for objects such as I described in my letter of the 23rd April, No. 529, No. 1. and I therefore asked whether this could not be done. It was a great satisfaction to me to receive your message of the 27th April, stating that you were consulting the Presbyterian body, and would try to obtain their assent to such a policy; and I found, on a long conversation with Earl Granville yesterday, how great an interest and importance he attached to the steps you were taking.

In the meanwhile the negotiations between England and Germany respecting their relative position in the Western Pacific had been completed, and I now transmit to you a paper just presented to the Imperial Parliament, containing declarations, signed at Berlin on the 6th and 10th April between the two Governments, for the demarcation of British and German spheres of influence in the Pacific, and for the establishment of reciprocal freedom of trade throughout their possessions and protectorates, as well as a mutual engagement between the two Powers never to establish any penal settlements in those regions.

I have mentioned above the conversation I had with Lord Granville; and I should add that his Lordship purposes to renew it in a few days, desiring me to send him an *aide-mémoire* on the points we discussed. I should therefore be very glad if, by the time I have to wait upon him again, you should have been able to send me more definite instructions. In the meantime the Victorian Government, having directed their representative here to reply at once to Lord Granville's despatch, I enclose copies of the letter just sent in by Major-General Sir Andrew Clarke, K.C.M.G., Acting-Agent-General for Victoria, in which you will find the argument against any cession of the New Hebrides to France repeated with much power.

By next mail I hope to examine the present aspect of the question more fully than I am able to do now.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

F. D. BELL.

### Enclosure 1.

I.—DECLARATION between the Governments of Great Britain and the German Empire relating to the Demarcation of the British and German Spheres of Influence in the Western Pacific. (Signed at Berlin, 6th April, 1886.)

THE Government of Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and the Government of His Majesty the German Emperor, having resolved to define the limits of the British and German spheres of influence in the Western Pacific,

The undersigned, duly empowered for that purpose, viz., (1) Sir Edward Baldwin Malet, Her Britannic Majesty's Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary; (2) Count Herbert Bismarck, His Imperial Majesty's Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, have agreed, on behalf of their respective Governments, to make the following declaration:—

1. For the purpose of this declaration the expression "Western Pacific" means that part of the Pacific Ocean lying between the 15th parallel of north latitude and the 30th parallel of south latitude, and between the 165th meridian of longitude west and the 130th meridian of longitude east of Greenwich.

2. A conventional line of demarcation in the Western Pacific is agreed to, starting from the north-east coast of New Guinea, at a point near Mitre Rock, on the 8th parallel of south latitude, being

the boundary between the British and German possessions on that coast, and following that parallel to point A, and thence continuing to points B, C, D, E, F, and G, as indicated in the accompanying charts, which points are situated as follows: (A.) 8° south latitude, 154° longitude east of Greenwich. (B.) 7° 15' south latitude, 155° 25' east longitude. (C.) 7° 15' south latitude, 155° 35' east longitude. (D.) 7° 25' south latitude, 156° 40' east longitude. (E.) 8° 50' south latitude, 159° 50' east longitude. (F.) 6° north latitude, 173° 30' east longitude. (G.) 15° north latitude, 173° 30' east longitude. The point A is indicated on the British Admiralty Chart 780, Pacific Ocean (South-west sheet); the points B, C, D, and E are indicated on the British Admiralty Chart 214 (South Pacific Solomon Islands); and the points F and G on the British Admiralty Chart 781, Pacific Ocean (North-west sheet).

3. Germany engages not to make acquisitions of territory, except protectorates, or interfere with the extension of British influence, and to give up any acquisitions of territory or protectorates already established in that part of the Western Pacific lying to the east, south-east, or south of the said conventional line.

4. Great Britain engages not to make acquisitions of territory, except protectorates, or interfere with the extension of German influence, and to give up any acquisitions of territory or protectorates already established in that part of the Western Pacific lying to the west, north-west, or north of the said conventional line.

5. Should further surveys show that any islands now indicated on the said charts as lying on one side of the said conventional line are in reality on the other side, the said line shall be modified so that such islands shall appear on the same side of the line as at present shown on the said charts.

6. This declaration does not apply to the Navigator Islands (Samoa), which are affected by treaties with Great Britain, Germany, and the United States; nor to the Friendly Islands (Tonga), which are affected by treaties with Great Britain and Germany; nor to the Island of Niue (Savage Island), which groups of islands shall continue to form a neutral region; nor to any islands or places in the Western Pacific which are now under the sovereignty or protection of any other civilized Power than Great Britain or Germany.

Declared and signed in duplicate at Berlin, this sixth day of April, 1886.

(L.S.) EDWARD B. MALET.  
(L.S.) GRAF BISMARCK.

## II.—DECLARATION between the Governments of Great Britain and the German Empire relating to the Reciprocal Freedom of Trade and Commerce in the British and German Possessions and Protectorates in the Western Pacific. (Signed at Berlin, 10th April, 1886.)

THE Government of Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and the Government of His Majesty the German Emperor, having resolved to guarantee to each other, so soon as the British and German spheres of influence in the Western Pacific have been demarcated, reciprocal freedom of trade and commerce in their possessions and protectorates within the limits specified in the present declaration, the undersigned, Sir Edward Baldwin Malet, Her Britannic Majesty's Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary; and Count Herbert Bismarck, His Imperial Majesty's Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, having been duly empowered to that effect, have agreed, on behalf of their respective Governments, to make the following declaration:—

1. For the purpose of this declaration the expression "Western Pacific" means that part of the Pacific Ocean lying between the 15th parallel of north latitude and the 30th parallel of south latitude, and between the 165th meridian of longitude west and the 130th meridian of longitude east of Greenwich.

2. The Government of Her Britannic Majesty and the Government of His Majesty the Emperor agree that the subjects of either State shall be free to resort to all the possessions or protectorates of the other State in the Western Pacific, and to settle there, and to acquire and to hold all kinds of property, and to engage in all descriptions of trade and professions, and agricultural and industrial undertakings, subject to the same conditions and laws, and enjoying the same religious freedom, and the same protection and privileges, as the subjects of the sovereign or protecting State.

3. In all the British and German possessions and protectorates in the Western Pacific the ships of both States shall in all respects reciprocally enjoy equal treatment as well as most-favoured-nation treatment, and merchandise of whatever origin imported by the subjects of either State, under whatever flag, shall not be liable to any other or higher duties than that imported by the subjects of the other State or of any third Power.

4. All disputed claims to land alleged to have been acquired by a British subject in a German possession or protectorate, or by a German subject in a British possession or protectorate, prior to the proclamation of sovereignty or of protectorate by either of the two Governments, shall be examined and decided by a mixed Commission, to be nominated for that purpose by the two Governments. The claim may, however, be settled by the local authority alone, if the claimant to the land makes formal application to that effect.

5. Both Governments engage not to establish any penal settlements in, or to transport convicts to, the Western Pacific.

6. In this declaration the words "possessions and protectorates in the Western Pacific" shall not include the colonies which now have fully-constituted Governments and Legislatures. The present declaration shall take effect from the date of its signature.

Declared and signed, in duplicate, at Berlin, this tenth day of April, 1886.

(L.S.) EDWARD B. MALET.  
(L.S.) GRAF BISMARCK.

## Enclosure 2.

SIR ANDREW CLARKE to the COLONIAL OFFICE.

SIR,—

30th April, 1886.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of Mr. Bramston's letters of the 17th and of the 22nd instant on the subject of the New Hebrides. I at once gave careful consideration to Mr. Bramston's statement of the 17th, that the French Government had undertaken to postpone their action in regard to sending further convoys of relapsed criminals to the Pacific until an answer should have been received by Her Majesty's Government from the Australian Colonies on the subject of the cession of the New Hebrides to the Republic, and that Lord Rosebery had stated that this answer might be expected to arrive towards the end of April. I was previously under the impression that the final answer of the federated colonies had been communicated to Her Majesty's Government by the Chairman of its Committee of Ministers, the Hon. Mr. Griffiths, Premier of Queensland, on the 22nd March, in the following terms: "Colonies in Federal Council, except Fiji, which cannot be communicated with, have insuperable objection any alterations in *status quo ante* New Hebrides in direction sovereignty of France. They adhere to the resolution Sydney Convention and Address of Federal Council, 5th February. In their opinion very strong reason to believe that, if France cannot get an increase of territory, she will have very soon to wholly relinquish to deport prisoners Pacific. Should she not, legislative powers Australian Colonies must be exercised to protect their own interests by exclusion. Under the circumstances no advantage will be derived from accepting proposals, but only very considerable injury."

And I had regarded this reply as being supplemented and completed by the admirable minute of the Acting-Governor of Fiji, of which I had the honour to transmit a *précis* to you on the 8th instant. But on receipt of Mr. Bramston's letter I at once telegraphed to my Government to inquire whether any further answer beside Mr. Griffith's telegram was coming, and, in reply, I received by cable, on the 22nd instant, a despatch stating that Her Majesty's Ministers at Melbourne considered "any reply beyond Mr. Griffith's telegram unnecessary. It declared the deliberate decision of the colonies."

2. I wish here to observe that it is evident to me, although the fact is apparently as yet imperfectly realized by the statesmen of this country, that the Ministers who had conveyed this decision to Her Majesty's Government speak in their own full sense of the powers conveyed to them by the "Act to constitute a Federal Council of Australasia," which in its 15th section refers to the consideration of the Council "the relations of Australasia with the islands of the Pacific;" and that they, under the circumstances, not unreasonably hold that the contemplation of any cession of the New Hebrides to the French Republic, after such a unanimous expression of their opinion as that to which I have just referred, would be a contravention of the spirit and terms of that Act.

3. The record of the proceedings of the Federal Council, which has been communicated to me by the Secretary of State on the 20th instant, contains several illustrations of the sense in which the powers conferred by Parliament on the Council were understood and accepted by its members. In his opening address, for example, the President, Mr. Service, said, "For the first time the exercise of Imperial authority has been transferred to the statesmen of Australasia, by conferring on them the power to legislate on matters beyond their own territorial limits. The relations of Australasia with the islands of the Pacific are daily becoming more close and intimate, and it is a matter for deep satisfaction that the regulation of these relations now rests with ourselves." And he, a little later, says, "The 29th section of the Federal Council Act itself invests us with a power whose importance cannot be overrated, the power for the Council to make such representations or recommendations to Her Majesty as it may think fit with respect to any matters of general Australasian interest, or to the relation of Her Majesty's possessions in Australasia with the possessions of foreign Powers. Occasions for the exercise of this power are likely to be frequent and important, and, if the Council possessed no other function than this, it would be able materially to influence the destinies of these colonies."

4. It so happened that the New Hebrides afforded the first occasion for the exercise of the powers to which Mr. Service referred in language of such grateful and loyal acknowledgment. On the day before its session closed a telegraphic despatch was received from the then Agent-General for Victoria, notifying the publication of the Convention concluded at Berlin, in which the future destiny of those islands was contemplated by the contracting Governments without the least reference to the repeated agreements between France and England to respect their independence. Great alarm was naturally excited by this disclosure, and was expressed in the address to Her Majesty unanimously adopted, in which it was declared that the Council regard it as a matter of grave importance to Her Majesty's Australasian Colonies that the islands should not fall under any foreign dominion (recalling Lord Derby's positive assurance to that effect), and that they give place to some more definite engagement in order to secure them from being annexed to any foreign Power.

5. It cannot, therefore, I think, be fairly said that the colonies concerned have spoken on the subject in excess of their statutory powers, or with any uncertain sound. I may add that at Hobart, as well as since, they have had fully before them the conditional assurances, not now for the first time put forward on behalf of the French Foreign Office, and urged in Mr. Bramston's letter of the 22nd instant, to the effect that, if the New Hebrides were to be now quietly yielded, the stream of French criminality would no longer be disembodyed in the Pacific, but, if not, not. To such a threat—if it be a threat—the federal colonies will, if I am not much mistaken in their spirit, never yield. Such a bargain, if it is to be regarded as a bargain, I am equally convinced they will never make. There was a time when a great French Sovereign said that the nations of the earth knew, when they saw the flag of France pass, that a great cause went before it, and that a great people followed after it. If the French Republic wills to identify its flag at New Caledonia

with the perpetuation of that taint of abandoned and derelict crime from which some of our colonies in their early days so severely suffered, and whose effects are perhaps even yet felt, it will be difficult to make the new nations of the Southern Seas for ages to come believe that its cause is the cause of right and justice, or its people a people who really love liberty and civilization. I would rather hope that a people like the historic French nation, of naturally great and generous instincts, ever proud of its fair fame and sacrifices for freedom, whose citizens have been always welcome to visit or to abide with equal privilege in our colonies, and who have yearly multiplying relations of prosperous commerce in those seas, will recognize, on due remonstrance, that it is not to their own honour or advantage to maintain as their sole representative settlement in the Western Pacific that which is regarded by the adjoining States as a source of danger and infection, and a cause of ill-will and bad neighbourhood. The colonies can and will protect themselves, as you well know, but the strict moral and material quarantine by which they must do so may unhappily involve great danger to the friendly relations which it is their most sincere wish to cherish with the French people.

6. Mr. Bramston, in his letter of the 22nd instant, states that 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. But why should the annexation of the New Hebrides be necessary in order to obtain supplies of labour for New Caledonia? It is not surely intended to reduce the people of those islands to a state of servitude. At present their labour is freely recruited for the English colonies and for German settlements. It is this very reason which, when alleged as a ground for annexation, most revolts the Christian conscience of Her Majesty's colonial subjects. It is notorious that all that has been done to introduce civilization and religion among the races of the New Hebrides has been done by the people of Australia. They are shocked at the thought that it will all be most assuredly undone if the French convict and the native convert are to be compulsory associated together. I will take leave to cite here the four reasons given in the petition of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria to Her Majesty, forwarded in the despatch of Governor Sir H. Loch to Lord Derby on the 15th April, 1885: "First, because the inhabitants of the islands emphatically object to French authority, and earnestly desire to be under British rule. Second, because the civilizing influences and commercial enterprises that have made these islands accessible have been mainly promoted by British subjects. Third, because the action of France in the Loyalty and Society Islands shows that such annexation would be detrimental to the interests of the Christian missions already established on the islands at a considerable expenditure of money and sacrifice of life, of which your petitioners have contributed their share. Fourth, because the transferring to these islands of French convicts would not only result in serious injury to the natives, but become a source of danger to your Majesty's loyal subjects in Australasia." It was after submitting this petition to the Queen that Lord Derby wrote, not merely would no proposal for the annexation of the New Hebrides to France ever be entertained by Her Majesty's Government without consulting the Australian Colonies, but also "without securing conditions satisfactory to those colonies." Relying ever since on the pledge thus given on so solemn an occasion, it is easy to conceive the indignation with which the colonists now find themselves, after a year, confronted with the alternatives presented by Mr. Bramston's letter, and of which the one most odious to their feelings is pressed upon their acceptance. Mr. Bramston says that the New Hebrides form a part of the same geographical group with New Caledonia. I think the argument of natural geographical grouping has never hitherto been very attentively considered in the growth of the British Empire; and certainly, on the last occasion, when it might have been appealed to with some effect—I mean on the occasion when Germany was allowed to seize North-eastern New Guinea, with New Britain and New Ireland—the Australian Colonies had no reason to feel that it was much regarded by the British Government. But I submit that it does not involve much study of very large maps to conclude that there is none of the reasons which fall within the ordinary pale of geography which would not sustain, with greater force, the argument that the New Hebrides are more naturally related to the Fijian group of islands than to New Caledonia. Mr. Bramston declares that "French enterprise has made considerable progress in the New Hebrides." I am aware that there have been some lands purchased by French subjects; but it is notorious that the bulk of the trade of the islands is with Australasia, and that it is a growing trade; and that in the highest kind of human enterprise at least £160,000 have been spent by subjects of the Queen on building churches and maintaining missionaries. The result is simply and succinctly told in the words of one of the most venerable and devoted of those missionaries, the Rev. John Paton: "By God's blessing on our persevering labours ten of the native languages have been reduced to a written form, and other four are being reduced to writing. The Bible is translated, printed, and now read, by those who were once cannibals, in ten different languages; eight thousand natives profess Christianity; family worship is regularly night and morning conducted in every Christian family; and all things are rapidly changing under the blessed light and power of the Gospel. Life and property are now safe on the fifteen islands occupied by missionaries, and comparatively safe on the whole group." These results have been purchased not by gold nor by toil alone; the blood of Bishop Pattison and many another missionary martyr has sanctified the field of English Christian enterprise, whose inhabitants it is now contemplated to abandon to the lot of the compulsory labour-reserve of a French convict settlement.

7. While speaking in the temporary charge which I hold on behalf of the Government of Victoria, as I am instructed to do, I hope I may be excused if I add that their present policy is entirely in consonance with what my own early and intimate personal knowledge of those colonies would have led me to expect. Forty years have passed since I witnessed, as I may say, the dawn of the history of those now powerful and prosperous Commonwealths, and felt honoured, as I shall continue to do to my last day, in bearing my part in their early organization and government. I was witness to the strong national sentiment evoked even in those days by the attempt of the Imperial Government to continue and extend the convict system, and I feel sure that, if that policy

had not been definitely abandoned, the connection of Australia with the Crown would have been most seriously imperilled. I recognize the same national sentiment again, active and alive—a sentiment which, proud of all that has yet been done within a single reign by the people of the Queen's three kingdoms alone for the greatness, prosperity, and liberty of so vast and wealthy a region, resents the establishment of a foreign prison of convicts in its midst, and the consequent claim to annex, and, as they believe, demoralize by enforced association, a native population for whose welfare, here and hereafter, they have not spared men or means. If the French people had chosen to build up in its Pacific possessions colonies such as still in Canada and Mauritius attest their administrative skill, I need not say how welcome such an association and rivalry of system would have been to our people; but it is not over such a community that the great flag of France now hangs in the Western Pacific, nor is there much hope that it will. Throughout those seas and islands manifest destiny impels and spreads the expeditions, the evangelization, the settlements of our own people, as America is being overspread by a kindred race; and it is no wonder that they should feel that they have a heritage in the region which no other race can have—a region ample to receive and give happy homes to millions who now struggle with penury in the Mother-country—and who also feel they have a right to expect that that region shall be kept free from the rivalry and criminality while open to the free enterprise and energy of all other races.

8. In conclusion, I have to request that you will inform the Secretary of State that, in addition to the telegraphic despatch on the subject communicated to you by Mr. Murray Smith on the 31st ultimo, several of the same tenor have been also received from my Government. One of them, referring to a report in the Press that an eminent member of the present Government had declared Victoria was unreasonable in persistently refusing compromise with France, says, "Victoria neither obstinate nor unreasonable. Compromise assumes rights. What better right has France than England? What equal right in comparison Australia? Alleged compromise consists in promise to send no more convicts Pacific, and give Rapa to England. Transportation to Pacific must soon cease, because New Caledonia cannot receive many more convicts, and Rapa is not of value in comparison. We protest against even discussing conditions until necessity is shown for altering present status." From another, to which I have already referred at the commencement of this letter, in which it is stated that Mr. Griffith's telegram embodied the final decision of the federal colonies, I extract the following further passage: "New South Wales divided as to whether trust promise France send no more convicts Pacific, but prefer France, if possible, should not have New Hebrides. Feeling in New South Wales strengthening against ceding New Hebrides. In Victoria meetings held throughout colony, and large meeting Melbourne passing resolutions sending me petitions urging every effort prevent New Hebrides going to France. All absolutely unanimous—convinced more than ever that ceding would be blunder little short of crime."

I have, &c.,

ANDREW CLARKE.

## No. 6.

The PREMIER to the AGENT-GENERAL.

HEBRIDES.—Take up this position. Cannot at present recommend cession because Presbyterian established missions faith denationalization. Otherwise consider conditions most favourable. Have appealed to Church to consent.

ROBERT STOUT.

11th May, 1886.

## No. 7.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the PREMIER.

SIR,—

7, Westminster Chambers, London, S.W., 20th May, 1886.

I received on the 11th instant your telegram defining the position taken up by you on the New Hebrides question: that New Zealand could not at present recommend the cession of the islands to France, as the Presbyterian missions had been established on the faith of the group being denationalized, but that otherwise you thought the conditions I had named were most favourable, and that you had appealed to the Church for its consent.

Since then I have also had the honour to receive your despatch of the 8th April, for which I am greatly obliged.

A.—5, 1886,  
No. 30.

Your telegram came at the critical moment when the Imperial Government most desired to know the views of all the Australasian Governments. There never had been, of course, any doubt about the policy of Victoria or Queensland, nor had strong language been wanting, as you point out, in which that policy should be presented to the Imperial Government. But, while there had certainly been ground to suppose, from the Governor's telegram of the 18th March, as well as from telegrams of the Government of New South Wales, that New Zealand as well as New South Wales were disposed to look with some favour on the French Ambassador's proposals, there had been no such express concurrence or support as alone could counterbalance the inflexible attitude of the other Governments. Practically, therefore, the weight had long been passing into the Victorian scale.

Questions were put in the House of Commons the other night by Mr. Howard Vincent, and I enclose the *Times* reports of what passed. To the first of these Mr. Gladstone replied that, although the resolution of the Convention against further acquisitions in the Pacific by foreign Powers was not in itself binding even on the Colonial Government, and much less on the Imperial Government, it was an expression of opinion to which Her Majesty's Governments would certainly have regard. To the second question, whether the French Ambassador had been given clearly to understand that Her Majesty's Government would not upon any consideration entertain his proposal, the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies replied that, although M. Waddington had been privately

Not printed.

informed by Lord Rosebery of the nature of the answers from the colonies, and of their probable result, no formal reply had yet been given to the Government of the Republic.

A.—5c, 1886, No. 57, and No. 1.

The question, however, is virtually settled, and I must now recall the expressions in my letters of the 22nd and 23rd April, No. 517 and No. 529, which may have led you to believe that Her Majesty's Government would let the islands go to France. On the contrary, it will not be long before Lord Rosebery tells the Government of France that, as the assent of Australia to the cession is refused, the agreement for the independence of the islands must be maintained.

Of course, the question always was, which of two things was most important to Australasia: that transportation should cease in the Pacific, or that the Hebrides should go to France. The first of these two objects was ever the one that seemed to me to transcend every other in its bearing on the future of the Pacific, and to it I devoted every humble effort of which I was capable. For a moment it seemed as if the curse of transportation was to be lifted from that fair region; but we may see it descend more heavily than ever if what is passing now in France is any indication of the course that will be taken when the question comes before the Chambers. On this, however, I shall soon be writing to you again.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

F. D. BELL.

### Enclosure.

[Extract from the *Times*, Friday, 14th May, 1886.]

#### THE AUSTRALASIAN CONVENTION.

MR. H. VINCENT asked the First Lord of the Treasury whether Her Majesty's Government considered the Mother-country bound to the first resolution of the Australasian Convention held in Sydney in 1883, "That further acquisition of dominions in the Pacific, south of the Equator, by any foreign Power would be highly detrimental to the safety and well-being of the British possessions in Australasia, and injurious to the interests of the Empire." And, in such case, whether in order to avoid any misunderstanding upon the subject, a notification to this effect had been or would be communicated to the Ambassadors and Ministers of foreign States.

MR. GLADSTONE.—The resolution to which the question of the honourable member calls attention is not, of course, in the nature of law, but is an expression of opinion by an important body. It is not in itself binding in any manner, even on the Colonial Government, much less on the Imperial Government. It is, however, an expression of opinion to which Her Majesty's Government would certainly have regard, according to the circumstances, as part of the matter for their consideration in any case that may arise and might seem to touch the resolution.

[Extract from the *Times*, Saturday, 15th May, 1886.]

#### THE NEW HEBRIDES.

MR. H. VINCENT asked the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the French Ambassador had been given clearly to understand that Her Majesty's Government could not upon any consideration entertain His Excellency's proposals for the further acquisition by France of the New Hebrides Islands on the Australian coast, and the consequent abandonment of the valuable work of civilization among its independent native population of the British Presbyterian Church.

MR. O'MORGAN.—There appears to be some misunderstanding on this question both here and in the colonies. The facts are simply these: The French Government laid certain proposals before Her Majesty's Government, embodying a declaration that they would not send any convicts to the Pacific, and a consent on our part to the French Government occupying the New Hebrides. Her Majesty's Government were of opinion that this proposal, which would put an end to the question of sending any convicts to the Pacific, was worth full consideration, but that in no case could it be entertained excepting under three conditions: (1) That it provided full protection and freedom for religion and for trade in the New Hebrides; (2) that it was accompanied by the cession of the Island of Rapa; and (3) that the opinion of the Australasian Colonies, to which Her Majesty's Government attached the greatest importance, should first be ascertained. Lord Rosebery informed the French Ambassador that it was necessary to consult the Australasian Colonies, and that therefore no answer could be given till the end of April; but he did not disguise from the French Ambassador that in his opinion it was, to say the least, improbable that the colonies would assent to the French proposals. The telegraphic answers from the colonies are unfavourable, excepting those from New South Wales and New Zealand, of which the Governments are in favour of the plan. M. Waddington has been privately informed by Lord Rosebery of the nature of these answers and of the probable result, but no formal reply has been given, as the correspondence with the colonies is not yet complete.

### No. 8.

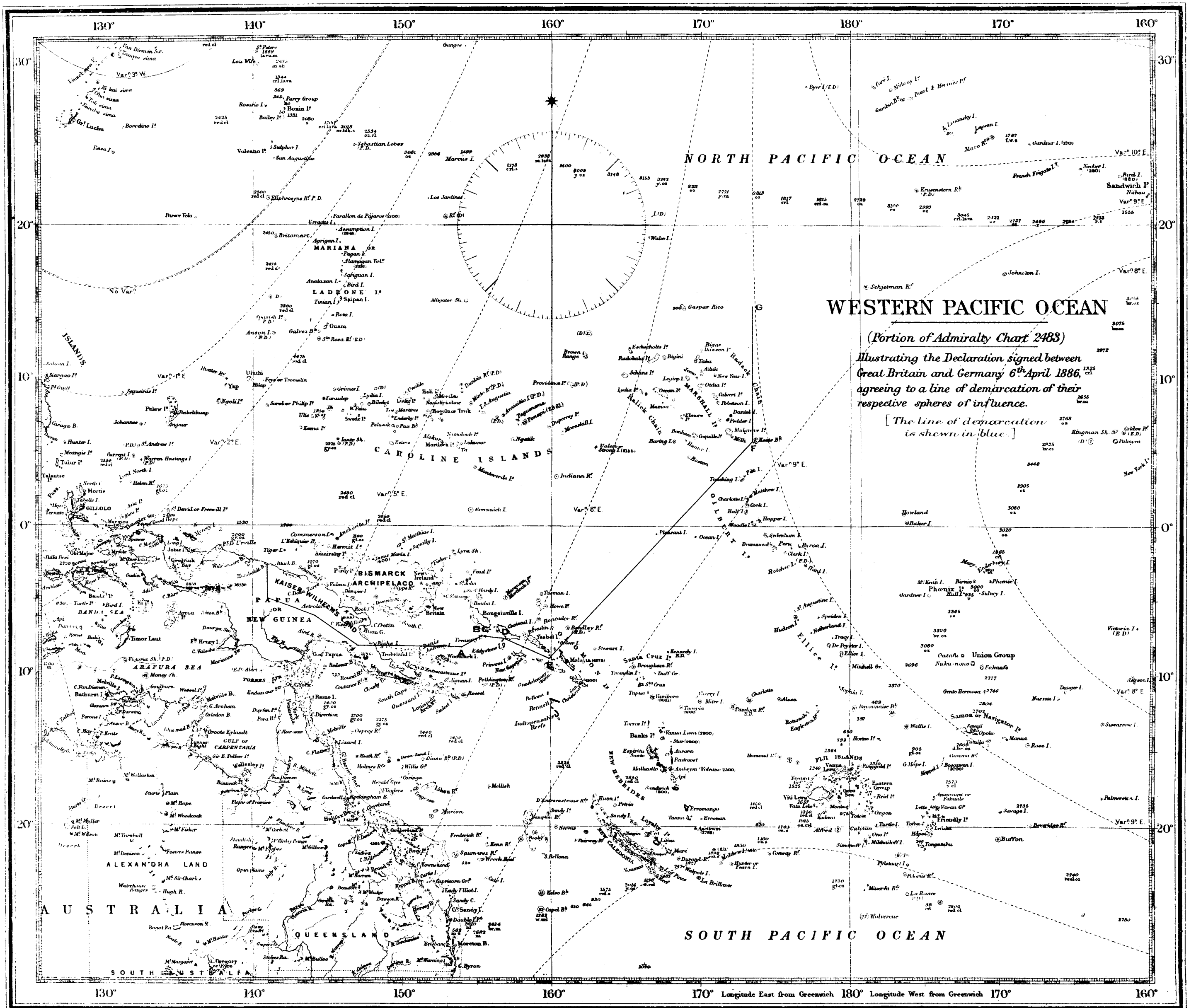
#### The SOUTHLAND PRESBYTERY to the PREMIER.

First Church, Invercargill, 2nd June, 1886.

THE which day the Presbytery of Southland met and was constituted. *Sederunt*: The Rev. A. H. Stobo, Moderator *pro tem.*, and Messrs. Cameron, Stevens, Ferguson, Gordon, &c. *Inter alia*, a motion was made by Mr. Ross *re* New Hebrides Islands, as follows: "The Presbytery, considering the interests of the New Hebrides natives, and also the labours and sacrifices of our missionaries there, unanimously protest against the annexation of these islands by the French; they likewise seek urgently to impress on our Government the necessity of using every means to prevent such annexation." The motion was unanimously carried, and ordered to be forwarded to the Premier.

Extracted from the records of Presbytery by

ALEX. BETHUNE,  
Presbytery Clerk.



## WESTERN PACIFIC OCEAN

(Portion of Admiralty Chart 2483)

Illustrating the Declaration signed between  
Great Britain and Germany 6<sup>th</sup> April 1886,  
agreeing to a line of demarcation of their  
respective spheres of influence.

[The line of demarcation  
is shown in blue.]



## 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, &amp;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, &amp;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, &amp;c.,

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

I transmit herewith copy of a letter which the Colonial Office sent to all the Agents-General on the 12th instant, containing this information.

Last night a Press telegram was published to the effect that the French ships in question had arrived and landed the troops, when the French flag had been immediately hoisted; and that visits had been exchanged between the commanders of the French and English men-of-war. I transmit herewith an article which has appeared on the subject in to-day's paper.

This morning a telegram was received by Mr. Graham Berry from the Premier of Victoria, stating that intelligence had reached Sydney of the return of the French vessels to Noumea, after landing the troops, with artillery, and forming two military posts, whose establishment had been formally notified to the resident settlers of all nationalities. Mr. Berry has thereupon sent in strong protests to Lord Granville.

I need not say that these events are no surprise to me; on the contrary, as you know, I have expected them for a long time, and have repeatedly assured your predecessors and yourself that they would happen. It was inevitable, when official encouragement was so constantly given to French subjects to acquire land in the group, that such acquisitions should lead to disputes with the natives, that the French settlers should thereupon ask for protection, and that they should get it when they asked. Over and over again I have urged the certainty of this chain of events when speaking, as I have so often had to do, on behalf of Australasia, by the unanimous request of all my colleagues, at interview after interview with successive Secretaries of State; and you will hardly have had time to read what I urged once more to Lord Granville at the last of these interviews before you learnt that the very thing had happened which his Lordship had been assured would come to pass.

It is too early for any one yet to tell what the Governments will do now. But you will have seen from the last words of my letter of the 20th May that a good deal had long been passing on the subject in France, and I shall endeavour in another letter to trace the gradual development of the question there until it should be made to reach the present phase of so much perplexity for both countries.

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

F. D. BELL.

#### Enclosure 1.

The COLONIAL OFFICE to the AGENT-GENERAL.

SIR,—

Downing Street, 12th June, 1886.

I am directed by Earl Granville to inform you that the French Government were invited to furnish an explanation of the statements that have recently been published respecting the alleged despatch of a man-of-war and transport to the New Hebrides, with troops and building materials on board.

M. de Freycinet has, in reply to this request, stated to Lord Lyons that the natives of the New Hebrides had recently massacred several of the Frenchmen who had proceeded there in the employment of the French company, and that the rest of them had called upon the company either to remove them or to provide for their security. The company thereupon applied for protection to the Governor of New Caledonia, and two ships with some troops on board were sent by the Governor, with instructions to proceed to the localities in which Frenchmen were in danger, and also, if it should prove necessary for the protection of their countrymen, to land troops and retain them there until the danger should be past and tranquility restored. These measures, M. de Freycinet stated, were without any political significance, and involved no question whatever of occupying the New Hebrides, nor did the French Government propose to depart from the obligation contracted by them in respect of that group.

I have, &c.,

The Agent-General for New Zealand.

EDWARD WINGFIELD.

#### Enclosure 2.

[From the *Times*, Thursday, 17th June, 1886.]

FRANCE AND THE NEW HEBRIDES.

Melbourne, 16th June, 1886.

THE French transport "Dives," with troops on board, arrived at the New Hebrides on the 1st instant, and the French flag was immediately hoisted. Visits were exchanged between the captain of Her Majesty's ship "Undine" and the French commander.

A startling announcement comes from Melbourne. It is stated that the French transport "Dives," with troops on board, arrived at the New Hebrides on the 1st instant, and that the French flag was immediately hoisted. No further particulars are given as to the circumstances in which the alleged occupation took place; it is, however, added that visits between the French commander and the commander of Her Majesty's ship "Undine" were exchanged—a fact which reminds one that two English vessels of war are at present stationed at the New Hebrides. Such is the statement telegraphed from Melbourne. We are altogether reluctant to believe in its accuracy; having regard to what has lately passed between the two Governments, it would be unwarrantable to do so. When questioned in the House of Commons this day week with respect to the New Hebrides, Mr. Bryce stated that he had been informed only the day before by the French Ambassador that he knew nothing of any intention to send troops and to establish a station there. All that he had heard from his Government was that two small vessels had been despatched to the New Hebrides in consequence of the murder of a French citizen. Mr. Bryce then said that he could not doubt that the French Government would loyally observe the engagements entered into in 1878, and renewed in 1883. We prefer to think that this statement

still holds good. These engagements are very explicit, and the French Government have recently had fresh reasons for knowing that in regard to this matter England is in earnest. We have to do with a country which conducts its affairs honourably; and, in view of the repeated assurances of an intention to respect the independence of the New Hebrides, it is only just to suspend belief in the correctness of the statement. The reference to the courtesies interchanged between the English and French naval commanders seems to point to the presence of the latter for a temporary purpose, not inconsistent with the clearly-defined engagements of a nation with which we are on the most friendly footing. Further details will no doubt soon be telegraphed; but in the meantime the best course is to abstain from assuming the accuracy of the report.

Of the views of the Australian Colonies on any such act of aggression there is no doubt, and French statesmen are well aware that their feelings are a most important factor in the matter. Writing lately, our Melbourne correspondent mentioned the meetings held in all the chief towns of Victoria, at which resolutions denouncing the meditated cession of the New Hebrides to France were passed. Our colonists are on the alert: there is a feeling abroad that care must be taken to prevent a repetition of the error of the Colonial Office in allowing a part of New Guinea to be ceded to Germany. We are able, very opportunely, to print this morning a despatch addressed to the Under-Secretary of the Colonies on the 30th April last by Sir Andrew Clarke, Acting-Agent-General of the Victorian Government, which shows more clearly than any document yet published the nature and strength of the colonists' case. If our Government have at last taken up a firm and decided position, and have shaken off the mood of indifference, so exasperating to the colonists, which Lord Derby mistook for wisdom, the change is to be attributed in no small degree to the character of Sir Andrew Clarke's able despatch. He is surprised that the Colonial Office should appear, in April, 1886, to be in doubt as to the final answer of the federated colonies. The Premier of Queensland, as Chairman of the Committee of Colonial Ministers, made known in March that there were "insuperable objections" to any alteration in the *status quo* of the New Hebrides in the direction of the sovereignty of France. In the language of one of the sections of "the Act to constitute a Federal Council for Australasia" there is explicit recognition of the right of the colonies to deal with the matter; the Federal Council is to be free to consider "the relations of Australasia with the islands of the Pacific," and it was, it is pointed out, a strong argument for creating the Federal Council that it would be invested with such useful powers. Against the notion that France has acquired some sort of inchoate right to the New Hebrides Sir Andrew Clarke argues strongly. On what is it founded? Not on the achievements of French civilization or commerce. "It is notorious that all that has been done to introduce civilization and religion among the races of the New Hebrides has been done by the people of Australia. I am aware that there have been some lands purchased by French subjects. But it is notorious that the bulk of the trade of the islands is with Australasia, and that it is a growing trade." Mr. Bramston (the Assistant-Under-Secretary) had sought for an apology for the action of France in the view that the New Hebrides formed part of the same geographical group of islands as New Caledonia, an observation which provokes the retort, "I think the argument of natural geographical grouping has never hitherto been very attentively considered in the growth of the British Empire; and certainly on the last occasion when it might have been appealed to with some effect—I mean on the occasion when Germany was allowed to seize North-eastern New Guinea, with New Britain and New Ireland—the Australian Colonies had no reason to feel that it was much regarded by the British Government." Besides, as Sir Andrew Clarke observes, it does not require much study of very large maps to see that the New Hebrides are more naturally related to the Fijian group than to New Caledonia.

Some of these arguments may be open to criticism. The material point is that all the Australian Colonies are united in the matter, and that they have a common policy of resistance to the extension of sovereignty by European nations in a remote region from their interests. It is of little consequence whether the antipathy to the establishment of convict settlements is exaggerated, and the apprehensions that the dregs of French society may percolate to the shores of Australia veil dislike and dread of the presence of new foreign establishments in the Pacific. Sir Andrew Clarke refers to the strong feeling evoked by the effort of the English Government to continue and extend the convict system. "I feel," he observes, "that, if that policy had not been definitely abolished, the connection of Australia with the Crown would have been most seriously imperilled." This will seem to many minds a weighty observation. It matters not, however, whether the sensitiveness to the introduction of French convicts be exaggerated. The fact to be noticed is the depth and unanimity of the feeling of aversion to all proposals for a cession on any terms of the New Hebrides to France. Our own Government have come to understand this, and are aware that the easy-going policy pursued in regard to New Guinea is remembered in Australia to the disadvantage of English statesmanship; and we have reason to believe that the French Government understand the importance which is attached to the matter. We are therefore in no hurry to believe in the commission of an act which would be flatly contrary to plain engagements, solemnly renewed, and altogether out of keeping with the character of a great and honourable nation. It is to be remembered that some days ago it was intimated in a telegram from Melbourne that no alarm was felt in consequence of the arrival of French vessels in the vicinity of the New Hebrides; the presence of Her Majesty's gunboat "Raven" and the schooner "Undine" was reassuring. In the present state of information it will be well to assume the existence of a loyal intention to observe the engagements with respect to the New Hebrides.

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## No. 13.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the PREMIER.

SIR,—

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

At the last moment before the mail closes I have received your telegram of to-day, telling me of the report having reached you of the French proceedings at the New Hebrides, and desiring me to cable you what was thought of them. I have only had time now to send you a hasty answer, but will soon telegraph further.

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

I have, &amp;c.,

F. D. BELL.

## Enclosures.

The PREMIER to the AGENT-GENERAL.

HEARSAY report French proceedings New Hebrides arrived. Wire opinion regarding them.  
17th June, 1886.

ROBERT STOUT.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the PREMIER.

HEBRIDES.—French landing and hoisting flag created strong sensation, coming so soon after Freycinet assurances. Articles condemning appeared to-day's papers. Too early yet form correct opinion, but at present I think shall only get renewed polite phrases. Will telegraph again soon.  
17th June, 1886.

F. D. BELL.

## No. 14.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the PREMIER.

SIR,—

7, Westminster Chambers, London, S.W., 18th June, 1886.

Last night a further statement was made in the House of Commons by the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs upon the New Hebrides question; and I enclose a *Times* report of what took place, together with an article that has appeared in the paper.

Mr. Bryce repeated in the House the substance of what I reported to you yesterday, adding that M. de Freycinet had said it was possible a temporary military post might be established in the group; but that, when Lord Lyons again saw the French Premier on the 14th, the latter repeated in the most positive manner the assurance that France had no designs affecting the political condition of the islands, nor any intention of occupying them, and that if troops had been landed they would be withdrawn as soon as the emergency had passed away.

Mr. Bryce said that no account of the hoisting of the French flag had been received from the commanders of Her Majesty's ships, but that these officers had been directed to send one immediately. In the meanwhile Lord Lyons had been directed to call the immediate attention of the French Government to the hoisting of the tricolour, and to inquire as to the circumstances under which it took place, as well as into the particulars of the alleged massacre of French subjects. Mr. Bryce ended by assuring the House that Her Majesty's Government were "fully sensible of the gravity" of the question.

The French papers received this morning contain the same assurances that no annexation is intended; and it is said in Paris that the troops were not sent in consequence of any orders from France, and that, as to the flag, the troops had simply taken their colours ashore with them as a matter of course, but nothing had been done which would in any sense signify an act of taking possession.

It is singular that great stress is laid in the English Press upon the supposed intention of France to create a new penal settlement at the New Hebrides, while hardly any reference is made to her offer to cease transportation altogether. I shall show, by-and-by, how clearly the offer was understood in that sense at Paris.

I have, &amp;c.,

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

F. D. BELL.

## Enclosures.

[Extract from the *Times*, Friday, 18th June, 1886.]

## FRANCE AND THE NEW HEBRIDES.

Sydney, 17th June.

INFORMATION has been received here from Noumea of the return to that place of the French transport "Dives" from the New Hebrides. The troops landed on the islands and hoisted the French flag at Sandwich and Mallicolo. The establishment of military posts has been notified to the Resident at each place irrespective of nationality. The Press of Noumea congratulate the French authorities on having accomplished the annexation of the New Hebrides in defiance of England and her colonies. Confirmation of the above intelligence has been received by the New South Wales Government from the British Consul at Noumea, who has strongly protested against the proceedings of the French.

Paris, 17th June.

With regard to the New Hebrides question, the *Temps* this evening again asserts that the French Government have ordered no act which could give rise to the belief that France had taken possession of the islands. They have only, it says, ordered provisional measures to be taken for the protection of French subjects.

## THE NEW HEBRIDES.—(House of Lords, Thursday, 17th June.)

The Marquis of SALISBURY said that, in the absence of the noble Lord the Foreign Secretary, he would give notice that to-morrow he would ask whether the Government could give the House any

information with respect to the reported and the unexpected action of the French Government in the New Hebrides.

Their lordships adjourned at ten minutes to five o'clock.

FRANCE AND THE NEW HEBRIDES.—(House of Commons, Thursday, 17th June.)

Mr. H. SPENSLEY asked the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Government had any definite knowledge of the asserted massacre of French citizens at the New Hebrides.

Sir M. HICKS-BEACH asked whether the Government had received any information as to the alleged hoisting of the French flag at the New Hebrides, and whether they could make known the contents of the communications that might have passed on the subject.

Mr. BRYCE.—In reply to the question of the honourable member for Central Finsbury and to the question just addressed to me by the right honourable Baronet the leader of the Opposition, I have to state that the only official information in the possession of Her Majesty's Government as to the reported massacre of French citizens at the New Hebrides is derived from the statement made to Lord Lyons by M. de Freycinet on the 10th June that a French company had sent a considerable number of Frenchmen to work in the New Hebrides, of whom several had been massacred by the natives. The rest had called upon the company either to make provision for their safety or to remove them. On the application of the company to the Governor of New Caledonia, two French ships had been sent with troops on board by the Governor to the places where Frenchmen were in danger. On that occasion M. de Freycinet added that it was possible that a temporary post might be established until quiet should be restored, but that the measure taken had no political significance, and that there was no question whatever of occupying the New Hebrides, or of anything tending to relax the obligations of France towards Great Britain respecting them. On the 14th instant Lord Lyons again saw M. de Freycinet, and represented the excitement both in England and Australia which the mere presence of French troops in the New Hebrides was calculated to produce. M. de Freycinet repeated in the most positive manner his assurance that France had no designs affecting the political condition of those islands, nor any intention of occupying them, and that she held herself bound by her agreement with England to respect their independence. He did not know whether any troops had been in fact landed, but, if there had been any put on shore, they would be withdrawn directly the emergency had passed away. The only official information respecting the hoisting of the French flag which Her Majesty's Government possess is contained in a telegram from the Acting British Consul in New Caledonia to the Governor of New South Wales, stating that he had reason to believe that the French flag was hoisted in the New Hebrides, and that he had made a formal protest to the Governor of New Caledonia. The commanders of two British ships of war now at the New Hebrides have been directed to report occurrences without delay. No report as to the hoisting of the French flag has yet been received from them. Lord Lyons has been further directed to call the immediate attention of the French Government to the reported hoisting of the French flag and to the excitement resulting from it, and to inquire as to the circumstances under which it took place, as well as to the particulars of the massacre referred to in the question. The House may rest assured that Her Majesty's Government is fully sensible of the gravity of the matter.

Sir H. MAXWELL asked how long a time must elapse before a telegraphic communication from the New Hebrides could reach England.

Mr. BRYCE replied that the New Hebrides were three days' sail from the nearest point in Australia from which telegraphic communications could be sent.

Sir G. CAMPBELL wished to know whether the Consul now representing the interests of this country in the New Hebrides was a paid Consul or a mercantile man.

Mr. BRYCE asked for notice of the question. All he could say at present was that the official in question was the Acting-Consul.

[Extract from the *Times*, Friday, 18th June, 1886.]

THE leader of the Opposition yesterday asked a question of the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs concerning the alleged hoisting of the French flag at the New Hebrides. Mr. Bryce, in reply, gave the House such information as the Foreign Office possessed on the subject, and concluded with the significant remark that "the House may rest assured that Her Majesty's Government are fully sensible of the gravity of the matter." It appears that on the 10th of this month M. De Freycinet explained the situation to Lord Lyons, and stated that the French Government had no intention of occupying the New Hebrides or of doing anything which might tend to relax the obligation of France towards this country respecting them. Four days later M. de Freycinet repeated these assurances with even greater emphasis and particularity, stating explicitly that France held herself bound by her agreement with England to respect the independence of the New Hebrides. With regard to the alleged hoisting of the French flag, Mr. Bryce explained that the only official information received by the Government was in the form of a despatch to the Governor of New South Wales from the Acting British Consul at New Caledonia, stating that he had reason to believe that the French flag was hoisted in the New Hebrides, and that he had made a formal protest to the Governor of New Caledonia. This information is corroborated and to some extent amplified by the telegram from Sydney which we print this morning. It appears that the French transport which conveyed the troops has returned to New Caledonia. The troops are said to have landed on the islands and to have hoisted the French flag at Sandwich and Mallicolo, due notification of the establishment of military posts having been given to the several foreign residents in the islands. It should be stated, however, that no information of the hoisting of the French flag has been received by the Government from the commanders of the two British ships of war now at the New Hebrides.

After the solemn assurances given by M. de Freycinet, and solemnly repeated by him in reply to formal inquiries addressed to him by the British Ambassador—who, we may be sure, duly apprised him of the gravity with which the matter is regarded in this country—we are bound to

assume either that the French flag has not been hoisted in the New Hebrides, or that, if it has, the exact significance of the act has been somewhat misapprehended by those who have reported the occurrence. M. de Freycinet stated that it was possible that military posts might be temporarily established, and, if unofficial telegrams are to be trusted, it would seem that this step has been taken. It may be that the French flag has merely been hoisted at these temporary posts. But if it has been hoisted in any other circumstances than these, the matter at once assumes a very serious aspect. We know only too well that French commanders and French officials in distant parts of the world often exceed their instructions, and that their official superiors in Paris often find it somewhat difficult to restrain their excess of zeal. It so happens, indeed, that we have direct evidence of the state of French feeling in New Caledonia on the subject of the New Hebrides. "The Press of Noumea," says a telegram from Sydney, "congratulates the French authorities on having accomplished the annexation of the New Hebrides in defiance of England and her colonies." The Press of Noumea is not, perhaps, a very powerful organ of public opinion, but it is not without significance that it should have congratulated the French authorities on having done what the French Prime Minister declares they have not done, have not thought of doing, and will not be permitted to do.

The case is so clear and the assurances of the French Government are so recent and so explicit that we may safely rely upon M. de Freycinet's moderation and good sense to remove promptly any misunderstanding that may have arisen. So much, at least, is due to consideration for a friendly Power in respect of a solemn engagement. But the feeling of this country is not the only nor the most important thing to be taken into account. The feeling of the Australasian Colonies is strong and unanimous in the matter. They entertain a strong and perfectly intelligible objection to the extension of European sovereignty, other than that of England, over the Pacific Islands adjacent to Australasia. This feeling rests not upon mere territorial greed, but upon political and national sympathies, and upon a regard for the future homogeneity of Australasian political society which is worthy of all respect. In regard to France it rests also upon more immediately practical considerations. New Caledonia is a penal settlement. If the New Hebrides came under the sovereignty of France, there is no security that they would not in time be made penal settlements too. Australasia does well to be jealous on this point. England could not have continued to send her convicts to Australia without seriously imperilling the connection of Australia with the Crown. As little could she now consent to allow France, in defiance of a solemn engagement, to extend her sovereignty over the New Hebrides, with the ulterior prospect of those islands being made into French penal settlements. But there is no need to consider a contingency of this kind. The French Government fully understands that England could not if she would and would not if she could release it from its engagement, solemnly undertaken and repeated within the last few days, to respect the independence of the New Hebrides; it has declared explicitly that it has no desire to be released from the engagement and no intention of evading it. If, therefore, it should be found that the authorities in New Caledonia or the military commanders in the New Hebrides have, either through excess of zeal or for lack of proper instructions, done anything at variance with these declarations, we may be sure that M. de Freycinet will know how to vindicate the honour of the French nation by a prompt and unreserved disavowal of their acts.

### No. 15.

The PREMIER to the AGENT-GENERAL.

SIR,—

Premier's Office, Wellington, 19th June, 1886.

The discussion on the New Hebrides question is still unconcluded. Since I last wrote you the Committee of the House reported as follows: "That it is desirable that an arrangement should be concluded between England, France, Germany, and the United States neither to occupy nor annex any island or islands in the Western Pacific Ocean. If possible the recognition of this convention by other Powers should be obtained. Following the analogy of the mixed Commission for the suppression of the slave trade, which sat for many years at the Cape of Good Hope, such a mixed Commission for the Pacific might be created, consisting of Commissioners appointed by the contracting Powers, the said Commission having all the powers conferred by the Imperial Act 38 and 39 Vict. (1875), c 51, on the High Commissioner for the Pacific, whilst the united Governments would exercise over the Pacific the powers which are by the same Act conferred upon Her Majesty in Council."

The report was carried by a majority, but other motions proposed were as follows: By Hon. R. Stout: "That as the United Kingdom has no outposts in the Eastern Pacific, and no harbours for coaling-stations for steamers, it is desirable that, if possible, the island of Opara or Rapa should be obtained by England." By Hon. Sir Julius Vogel: "That it is desirable that the High Commissionership of the Pacific should be held by the Governor of New Zealand, and that he should exercise his powers thereunder as far as possible with the constitutional advice of his Ministers. That Great Britain should not agree to any change in the status of any of the Pacific Islands as independent countries, without recognizing how greatly the Australasian Colonies are interested in the question, and therefore without consulting them, and giving due deference to their advice."

When the report came before the House Sir George Grey moved that the report be confirmed, and Mr. M. J. Scobie Mackenzie moved an amendment as follows: "That it is of importance to Great Britain, and of especial importance to the Australasian Colonies, that a satisfactory understanding should be come to between the several States having interests in the Western Pacific as to their respective rights and claims. That the most pressing question at present requiring settlement is that between Great Britain and France in reference to the New Hebrides; that the most satisfactory settlement of this question, which now appears to be practicable, would be a treaty between Great Britain and France, whereby Great Britain should withdraw all opposition to the acquisition by France of the New Hebrides Islands on condition—(a) That no more convicts of any class

be sent by France to any of her possessions in the Western Pacific; (b) that protection, religious freedom, and peaceable possession of their rights and properties be granted to all British subjects residing in or resorting to the New Hebrides, and especially to the Presbyterian mission established there; (c) that freedom of trade and commerce be guaranteed to British subjects equally with those of France; (d) that the island of Rapa be ceded by France to Great Britain."

Mr. Ormond, who also spoke, said he disagreed with both motion and amendment, and gave notice that he would propose an amendment when the present one was disposed of as follows: "This House desires to convey to the Home Government its opinion that, in affecting a settlement of the question at issue between Great Britain and France in connection with the Pacific Islands, the chief point of interest to this colony, which is believed to be shared by all the Australasian Colonies, is that the deportation of convicts by France to any of her possessions in the Western Pacific should cease, and next, that, failing Great Britain being willing to extend her protectorate to those islands, the rights and interests of Her Majesty's subjects in those islands should be secured to them, and that this will best be attained by such an agreement with other Powers as will recognize the independence of the Government of the different groups of islands, subject to freedom of trade, commerce, and security of civil and religious liberty to all nations."

Last night the matter was again debated, and Mr. Montgomery, who spoke, said that he preferred a motion as follows: "That this House is of opinion that Great Britain should strenuously object to France occupying or annexing the New Hebrides."

In consequence, however, of the telegrams that have appeared in the papers as to France taking possession of the islands of Mallicolo and Sandwich, by planting a military dépôt and hoisting its flag, it was felt that it would be impossible to discuss the question at its present stage, and Sir Julius Vogel moved the adjournment of the debate, which was seconded by the Hon. Major Atkinson, and unanimously agreed to.

The action of the French in occupying, if not annexing the islands, pending negotiations with Great Britain, have caused, and will yet cause, profound irritation. Many members who would have voted for Mr. Scobie Mackenzie's amendment will now, I believe, support Mr. Montgomery. I hope it may turn out that the action of the "Dives" and the New Caledonian authorities has been without the sanction of the French Government. I cannot say, however, that the conduct of France is unexpected. In my letter to the Presbyterian Church I pointed out the contingency of such an event happening. It only shows the greater need of some definite arrangement being come to with France. If France does not repudiate the action of her authorities at the islands, then I expect the House will possibly carry Mr. Montgomery's amendment. I do not see how, in face of such a breach of faith—if such it be—the House can be expected to urge the Imperial Government to continue negotiations.

I enclose you copy of the *Hansard* containing the speeches of members on the subject so far as they have been published; also slips of the debates in the Legislative Council, in which, as you will see, the Hon. Sir Frederick Whitaker has moved similar resolutions to those proposed by Mr. Scobie Mackenzie, and to which the Hon. Dr. Menzies has given notice to move an amendment almost similar to that of Mr. Ormond in the Lower House. The debate in the Council, which is set down for Monday, will, I have no doubt, under the circumstances I have mentioned, be still further adjourned.

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

I have, &c.,

ROBERT STOUT.

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### No. 16.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the PREMIER.

To Premier, New Zealand.

HEBRIDES.—French Government still disclaims any intention annexing. Freycinet cabled Governor Caledonia discontinue flying tricolour. I think France intends making fresh proposals soon. Instruct whether shall pursue same course, because Berry Samuel instructed widely different. Constant inquiries which side New Zealand takes.

19th June, 1886.

F. D. BELL.

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### No. 17.

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

(Telegram.)

21st June, 1886.

LORD LYONS telegraphs that he is informed by M. de Freycinet to-day that French Government have not received news that flag had been hoisted at New Hebrides; but nevertheless orders have been sent to Governor New Caledonia that if hoisting has taken place it should be at once discontinued. No intelligence received by French Government in confirmation of other newspaper reports.

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### No. 18.

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

(Telegram.)

1st July, 1886.

NEW HEBRIDES.—House passed resolutions recognizing difficulties Imperial Government regarding Pacific Islands, urging no consent to temporary occupation, considering islands should remain unannexed; but, if Imperial Government consider it highly expedient to allow French annexation, then convict ~~and~~ should cease, British subjects be protected, Rapa ceded, Rarotonga and adjacent islands annexed, and labour traffic, if continued, controlled. Full resolutions by mail.

## No. 19.

The PREMIER to the AGENT-GENERAL.

SIR,—

Premier's Office, Wellington, 1st July, 1886.

No. 15.

Referring to my letter of the 19th ultimo relating to the New Hebrides, I have now the honour to inform you that, after repeated adjournments and a long debate yesterday, the following resolutions, moved by the Hon. Sir Julius Vogel, were carried by a considerable majority :—

“ That the Government be requested to represent to the Right Hon. the Secretary of State for the Colonies that this House—

“ 1. Recognizes the difficulties with which Her Majesty's Government have had to contend in dealing with questions relative to the Pacific Islands, and especially the New Hebrides Group, and hopes that the expression of its opinion on the subject will not be without use.

“ 2. Strongly urges Her Majesty's Government not to consent to the New Hebrides being temporarily occupied by any foreign nation on any pretext whatever.

“ 3. Considers that the many interests concerned would be best served by continuing the terms of the present understanding under which England and France have mutually agreed that neither country shall annex the group.

“ 4. Is of opinion that if, for reasons known to Her Majesty's Government, it is considered highly expedient to arrange for the annexation of the New Hebrides by France, efficient guarantee by treaty should be taken—(a) That no more convicts of any class be sent by France to any of her possessions in the Western Pacific; (b) that protection, religious freedom, and peaceable possession of their rights and properties be guaranteed to all British subjects residing in or resorting to the New Hebrides, and especially to the missions established there; (c) that freedom of trade and commerce be guaranteed to British subjects equally with those of France; (d) that the Island of Rapa be ceded by France to Great Britain, and all objections be waived to Great Britain annexing Rarotonga and adjacent islands.

“ 5. Is of opinion that the labour traffic of the islands, if continued, should be so controlled as to prohibit employing labourers without their consent, to prevent their ill-treatment, and to provide for their return to their homes after their contracts of service have expired.”

Certain other amendments by the Hon. Mr. Rolleston and Mr. Barron, in addition to those mentioned in my previous letter, were lost on division.

The Presbyterian Church has, as might have been expected, objected in the strongest terms. I enclose copy of the Moderator's letter and of several other letters on the subject I have received.

The substance of the resolutions has been wired this morning by His Excellency to the Secretary of State.

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

I have, &c.,

ROBERT STOUT.

A.—5c, 1886,  
No. 70.

## No. 20.

The PREMIER, New Zealand, to the PREMIERS, Victoria and New South Wales.

SIR,—

Premier's Office, Wellington, 1st July, 1886.

No. 19.

I do myself the honour to inform you that last night the House of Representatives passed the enclosed resolutions relating to the New Hebrides. The matter is still under consideration by the Legislative Council, but I expect that to-morrow similar resolutions will be adopted by that body.

I have, &c.,

ROBERT STOUT.

## No. 21.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the PREMIER.

SIR,—

7, Westminster Chambers, London, S.W., 2nd July, 1886.

No. 13.

Very soon after writing to you on the 17th June (No. 761), Her Majesty's Government received renewed assurances from M. de Freycinet that France disclaimed any intention of annexing the New Hebrides, and that orders had been cabled to the Governor of New Caledonia to discontinue flying the tricolour there. Hardly had this taken place when telegrams arrived from the Governor of Queensland and the Admiral on the Australian station to the effect that nothing had really been done by the French military detachment at the islands which could be construed into an act of taking possession.

No. 16.

I telegraphed to you on the 19th to this effect, adding that I had reason to believe the French Government would soon make some fresh proposals to Her Majesty's Government, and asking you to be pleased to instruct me whether I was to maintain the same attitude as I had hitherto done; because the instructions received by the Agents-General for Victoria and New South Wales were widely different, and constant inquiries were being made as to the course New Zealand would decide to take.

The San Francisco mail brought me yesterday your despatch of the 22nd May transmitting the resolutions moved in the House of Representatives by Sir George Grey, with the advance-sheets of the debate that ensued; and I also received, later in the day, your telegram informing me that the House had come to certain resolutions which had been cabled to the Secretary of State by the Governor. His Excellency's telegram was immediately communicated to me by the Colonial Office.

I have, &c.,

F. D. BELL.

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

A.—5c, 1886,  
No. 65.

## No. 22.

The PREMIER, New South Wales, to the PREMIER, New Zealand.

SIR,—

Treasury, Sydney, 15th July, 1886.

I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 1st instant, forwarding a No. 20. copy of certain resolutions relating to the New Hebrides Islands, passed on the 30th ultimo by your House of Representatives.

2. I note that you expected that on the day following the date of your letter similar resolutions would be adopted by your Legislative Council.

3. I shall be glad to be informed of all action taken by your colony in this matter, and would feel obliged by your forwarding me a copy of your *Hansard* containing the report of the debates on each occasion on which the subject referred to has been under the consideration of your Parliament.

I have, &c.,

P. A. JENNINGS,

Premier.

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington, New Zealand.

## No. 23.

The PREMIER to the AGENT-GENERAL.

SIR,—

Premier's Office, Wellington, 17th July, 1886.

In continuation of my letter of the 1st instant, I now have the honour to forward the No. 19. resolutions passed by the Legislative Council relative to the New Hebrides on the 7th.

"1. That it is of importance to Great Britain, and of especial importance to the Australasian Colonies, that a satisfactory understanding should be come to between the several States having interests in the Western Pacific as to their respective rights and claims.

"2. That the most pressing question at present requiring settlement is that between Great Britain and France in reference to the New Hebrides.

"3. That the most satisfactory settlement of this question which now appears to be practicable would be a treaty between Great Britain and France, whereby Great Britain should withdraw all opposition to the acquisition by France of the New Hebrides Islands, on condition—(a.) That no more convicts of any class be sent by France to any of her possessions in the Western Pacific. (b.) That protection, religious freedom, and peaceable possession of their rights and properties be guaranteed to all British subjects residing in or resorting to the New Hebrides, and especially to the missions established there. (c.) That freedom of trade and commerce be guaranteed to British subjects equally with those of France. (d.) That the Island of Rapa be ceded by France to Great Britain."

You will observe that they are in substance the same as the resolutions passed by the House of Representatives, with the exception that the House considered it desirable that the Islands should not be annexed by either England or France.

I do not know that I can add anything to what has been already said upon the subject, except to report that we rely on your best endeavours to secure a satisfactory termination of this vexed question.

I have, &c.,

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

ROBERT STOUT.

## No. 24.

The PREMIER, New Zealand, to the PREMIER, New South Wales.

SIR,—

Premier's Office, Wellington, 22nd July, 1886.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 15th instant, and I No. 22. now beg to enclose the resolutions relating to the New Hebrides passed by the Legislative Council No. 19. on the 7th. I have only to add that we have forwarded them to the Right Hon. the Secretary of State through the Governor, and also to the Agent-General, with the other resolutions passed by the House of Representatives, a copy of which I forwarded you on the 1st instant; but we have No. 20. done nothing further. As requested, I forward copies of the debates in both Houses as reported in *Hansard*.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Premier, Sydney, New South Wales.

ROBERT STOUT.

## No. 25.

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

SIR,—

Premier's Office, Wellington, 22nd July, 1886.

Referring to my letter of the 1st instant, I have now the honour to forward for your No. 20. information copy of the resolutions relative to the New Hebrides which were adopted by the No. 19. Legislative Council on the 7th. Copies of these, with the resolutions passed by the House of Representatives, have been forwarded to the Right Hon. the Secretary of State for the Colonies by His Excellency the Governor, and to the Agent-General; but we have not taken any further action in the matter.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Premier, Melbourne, Victoria.

ROBERT STOUT.

## No. 26.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the PREMIER.

SIR,—

7, Westminster Chambers, London, S.W., 30th July, 1886.

No. 15.

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 19th June, in which you inform me of the progress up to that time of the proceedings in Parliament on the subject of the New Hebrides; and I presume that the next mail will bring me the conclusion of those proceedings, with the final debate that resulted in the resolutions telegraphed by His Excellency the Governor to Earl Granville on the 1st July.

No. 18.

In the meantime I transmit to you herewith copy of a letter I have received from the Colonial Office, covering a despatch addressed by the Earl of Rosebery to the French Ambassador on the 7th instant, containing his Lordship's formal answer to M. Waddington's proposals of last March. Lord Rosebery says that, after consulting the Australasian Governments, and ascertaining that their opinion is overwhelmingly opposed to the arrangement proposed by France, Her Majesty's Government are unable to consent to any departure from the understanding by which both countries are bound to respect the independence of the New Hebrides.

I take this opportunity of also enclosing herewith copies of letters from the Colonial Office, which I find I have not already sent to you, as marked in the margin.

A Paris telegram appeared in to-day's *Times* that the French Government has given assurances to England that, as soon as the present emergency is past, the troops will be withdrawn from the New Hebrides. I annex the extract, together with some others published a few days ago from French papers relating to the despatch of the troops from Noumea, and to the proceedings of the German man-of-war "Albatross" in the Islands.

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

I have, &amp;c.,

F. D. BELL.

## Enclosure 1.

The COLONIAL OFFICE to the AGENT-GENERAL.

SIR,—

Colonial Office, Downing Street, 22nd July, 1886.

With reference to previous correspondence, I am directed by Earl Granville to transmit to you a copy of a letter addressed by the Earl of Rosebery to M. Waddington respecting the preservation of the independence of the New Hebrides. A copy of Lord Rosebery's letter will be forwarded from this department to the Governors of the Australasian Colonies by the next mail.

I have, &amp;c.,

The Agent-General for New Zealand.

ROBERT G. W. HERBERT.

## Sub-Enclosure.

The Earl of ROSEBERY to M. WADDINGTON.

M. L'AMBASSADEUR,—

Foreign Office, 7th July, 1886.

In the conversation which I had the honour to hold with your Excellency on the 30th April last with regard to the question of the New Hebrides, I stated that although I could not at that moment return a formal answer to the proposal made by the French Government on the subject, I was unable to hold out any hopes of a reply being given in the sense desired by your Excellency. For, putting all other considerations aside, Her Majesty's Government could not but be mainly guided in this matter by the opinion of the Australian Colonies, which they have now ascertained is strongly opposed to any agreement of the kind suggested. It was therefore superfluous to discuss any other objections which Her Majesty's Government might have entertained. The proposal, as understood by Her Majesty's Government, was to the effect that no objection should be raised by this country to the acquisition of the New Hebrides by France, and that in return for this concession France should engage not to send convicts or *recidivistes* to any place in the Pacific Ocean.

I now beg leave to inform you, M. l'Ambassadeur, that Her Majesty's Government, after long and careful consideration of all the issues involved in this important question, vitally affecting as it does Her Majesty's dominions in the Pacific, are unable to consent to any departure from the present understanding between Great Britain and France, by which the two countries are bound to respect the independence of the New Hebrides. They are well aware of the difficulties arising from the transportation of French criminals to the neighbourhood of British dominions, against which they have felt it their duty earnestly and repeatedly to protest. But the opinion of the Australasian Colonies, which are the parties chiefly affected by this proceeding, is overwhelmingly—if not unanimously—opposed to the arrangement suggested by your Excellency, in a spirit which I readily recognize as conciliatory and amicable.

I have, &amp;c.,

ROSEBERY.

## Enclosure 2.

The COLONIAL OFFICE to the AGENT-GENERAL.

SIR,—

Colonial Office, Downing Street, 19th June, 1886.

I am directed by Earl Granville to transmit for your information copy of a telegram respecting the New Hebrides which has been sent from the Secretary of State to the Governor of South Australia. The telegram from Lord Lyons, the purport of which was announced in Parliament last night, was not received in this office in time for a communication to be made to you yesterday.

I have, &amp;c.,

The Agent-General for New Zealand.

R. H. MEADE.

## Sub-Enclosure.

Earl GRANVILLE to Sir WM. ROBINSON.

(Telegram.) South Australia, 19th June, 1886.  
 TRANSMIT following telegram to Governors New Zealand and other Australasian Colonies :  
 " Lord Lyons telegraphs that he is informed by M. de Freycinet to-day that French Government have not received news that flag has been hoisted New Hebrides ; but, nevertheless, orders have been sent to Governor New Caledonia that if hoisting took place, it should be at once discontinued. No intelligence received by French Government in confirmation of other newspaper reports."

## Enclosure 3.

The COLONIAL OFFICE to the AGENT-GENERAL.

SIR,—

Downing Street, 26th June, 1886.

With reference to the letter from this department of the 19th instant, and to previous correspondence respecting the alleged French proceedings in the New Hebrides, I am directed by Earl Granville to transmit to you, for your information, a copy of a telegram on the subject which has been received at the Admiralty from the Commander-in-Chief on the Australasian Station.

I have, &amp;c.,

The Agent-General for New Zealand.

JOHN BRAMSTON.

## Sub-Enclosure.

Rear Admiral TRYON to the ADMIRALTY.

(Telegram.) Sydney, 23rd June, 1886.  
 " UNDINE " reports French landed 100 marines, two guns, Havanna Harbour ; and same number Mallicolo. French flag not officially hoisted. Governor of New Caledonia states no further action will take place without orders from France.

## Enclosure 4.

The COLONIAL OFFICE to the AGENT-GENERAL.

SIR,—

Downing Street, 29th June, 1886.

With reference to the letter from this department of the 26th instant, I am directed by Earl Granville to transmit to you, for your information, a copy of a further telegram respecting the New Hebrides which has been received at the Admiralty from the Commander-in-Chief on the Australian Station.

I have, &amp;c.,

The Agent-General for New Zealand.

R. H. MEADE.

## Sub-Enclosure.

Admiral TRYON to the ADMIRALTY.

(Telegram.) Sydney, 26th June.  
 CAPTAIN (of) " Dives " informed " Undine " on arrival that his orders were to form two military posts, but not to hoist flag. Senior officer expressed hopes to Governor New Caledonia agreement would not be infringed ; received assurances treaty would be respected.

## Enclosure 5.

[Extract from the *Daily Telegraph*, Wednesday, 28th July, 1886.]

THE NEW HEBRIDES.

(Telegram from our Correspondent). Paris, Tuesday Evening.

THE following note, the concluding lines of which confirm the information I sent you yesterday, is published this evening : " Some of the English newspapers speak this morning, as if it were of recent date, of a reply made by Lord Rosebery to some proposals of M. Waddington respecting the New Hebrides. The proposals in question were made eight or nine months ago, their object being the discussion of an arrangement for the abandonment of the New Hebrides to France. They were unattended with any result owing to the opposition of the Australian Colonies, and Lord Rosebery's answer, which is now referred to, was made as far back as the month of April. The *pourparlers* have not been resumed on this basis ; but it is affirmed that during the past few days some discussion has taken place between the two Governments for arriving at an understanding with a view to assuring public order and the security of the colonists in the New Hebrides."

Some interesting particulars of the expedition to the New Hebrides are published to-night by the *Temps* : " It was on the 30th May and the 1st June that the detachment, consisting of two hundred marines and sixty gunners, sailed from Noumea in the ' Dives ' and the ' Magellan.' When the first party embarked a steamer started off by order of the Governor to stop the schooner ' Ambroua,' which had left a few hours previously for the Loyalty Islands, it being apprehended that it had been secretly told to proceed as far as the New Hebrides with instructions from the British Consul to the two English warships cruising in those waters. The steamer caught up the ' Ambroua ' off the Porc-Epic, and detained her until the following morning. Meanwhile, no vessels were permitted to leave the Noumea roadstead until the ' Magellan ' had sailed. It is unnecessary to say that the departure of the two warships for the New Hebrides excited the utmost enthusiasm in New Caledonia, as every one was convinced that France had ordered the military demonstration, not for the purpose of protecting our fellow-countrymen, but of taking

possession of the group. On the 9th April a Frenchman, M. Clain, was cutting tobacco under his verandah when he was shot in the hand; a man named Harry Bone was poisoned on the 30th April at the instigation of a chieftain; and many other crimes of a like character were perpetrated at the expense of the colonists. Captain Gaspard, of the French schooner 'Cobalt,' who arrived at Noumea on the 31st May, reported the punishment inflicted by the German warship 'Albatross' on the natives of the Ile au Massacre, between whom and the colonists much bad blood existed. On the 19th May the 'Albatross' anchored off the island, pointed her guns at a party of natives who were on the beach, and at ten minutes after noon fired on them, killing thirteen at the first shot. Boats were then sent to pick up the wounded, and two, who died a short time afterwards, were taken on board. On the following day the 'Albatross' sent a party on shore, which burnt a village at nine a.m. It then moved on, and at half-past ten bombarded the south-east end of the bay, setting fire to another village. The landing company went on shore again, and returned at noon, when the 'Albatross' sailed away."

The *Temps* lays stress on the fact that a German warship should have previously chastised the tribes of the Ile au Massacre for offences of which it knows nothing.

(Reuter's Telegram.)

Melbourne, 27th July.—The decision of the Imperial Government not to allow the establishment of a French protectorate over the New Hebrides has given the greatest satisfaction here.

Paris, 27th July.—Negotiations are proceeding between the British and French Governments in regard to the withdrawal of the French troops from the New Hebrides.

[Extract from the *Times*, Friday, 30th July, 1886.]

ENGLAND, FRANCE, AND THE NEW HEBRIDES.

Paris, 29th July.

THE French Government has given assurances to England that as soon as the present emergency has passed, the French troops will be withdrawn from the New Hebrides.

#### No. 27.

The PREMIER, New South Wales, to the PREMIER, New Zealand.

SIR,—

Treasury, Sydney, 4th August, 1886.

No. 24.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 22nd July, forwarding a copy of the resolutions relating to the New Hebrides passed by your Legislative Council on the 7th of that month; and copies of the debates in both Houses on the matter, as reported in *Hansard*. I beg to express my thanks for your letter and its enclosures.

I have, &c.,

P. A. JENNINGS,

Premier.

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington, New Zealand.

#### No. 28.

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

SIR,—

Premier's Office, Melbourne, 6th August, 1886.

No. 25.

I have the honour to acknowledge, with thanks, the receipt of your letter of the 22nd ultimo, enclosing a copy of certain resolutions adopted by the Legislative Council of New Zealand on the 7th of July relative to the New Hebrides.

I have, &c.,

D. GILLIES,

Premier.

The Hon. the Premier, New Zealand.

#### No. 29.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the PREMIER.

SIR,—

7, Westminster Chambers, London, S.W., 20th August, 1886.

No. 19.

I have had the honour to receive your letter of the 1st July, transmitting the resolutions which the House of Representatives had passed respecting the New Hebrides.

The third resolution was, of course, the one of most practical consequence at that particular time, because it recommended the maintenance of the existing agreement between England and France as being the best policy to adopt in view of the many interests concerned. For the present, therefore, it may be taken for granted that Her Majesty's Government will not entertain any fresh proposals from France involving the abrogation of that agreement; and the New Hebrides question might be considered closed if it were certain that immediate or even early steps would be taken for the return of the detachment of French troops from the Islands, or that the rejection of M. Waddington's proposal would not lead to a more obstinate resumption of transportation. On neither of these points, however, can anything definite be yet said.

I shall continue, with your permission, to keep you as well informed as I can of what may happen, guiding myself, I need hardly say, so far as any action of mine is concerned, by the decision to which the Government invited the House to come.

I have, &c.,

F. D. BELL.

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

## 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, &amp;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, &amp;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, &amp;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

pour recueillir les adhésions ; des listes circulent en ville, et nous recommandons surtout aux habitants de Nouméa de signer au plus tôt, pour que la pétition puisse être remise au Gouverneur avant le départ du courrier :—

*“ Pétition à M. le Gouverneur de la Nouvelle-Calédonie.*

“ M. LE GOUVERNEUR,—

Nouméa, le 23 Juin, 1886.

“ Les soussignés, colons libres de la Nouvelle-Calédonie, ont l'honneur de vous soumettre respectueusement les considérations suivantes, relatives aux événements qui s'accomplissent aux Nouvelles-Hébrides.

“ S'il faut s'en rapporter aux journaux Australiens qui nous sont arrivés par le dernier courrier, le Gouvernement de la République aurait déclaré que l'occupation de Port-Havannah et de Port-Sandwich serait de courte durée et que les troupes engagées dans cette expédition ne tarderaient pas à rentrer à Nouméa.

“ Notre patriotisme se refuse énergiquement à admettre une semblable solution.

“ Nous ne pouvons croire que la France, après avoir arboré son drapeau sur cette terre, arrosée du sang de ces colons et de ses navigateurs, se retire devant des prétentions qui ne résisteraient pas à un examen sérieux.

“ Autant nous avons salué avec joie le départ des troupes Françaises pour les Hébrides, autant nous verrions avec douleur cette retraite, qui entraînerait infailliblement les plus graves conséquences.

“ Ce serait, en effet, porter un coup funeste à notre influence dans le Pacifique ; ce serait infliger à notre armée et à notre marine une humiliation imméritée ; ce serait livrer à la fureur des anthropophages la vie de nos nationaux établis aux Nouvelles-Hébrides, et le contre-coup de cette mesure se ferait sentir jusqu'en Nouvelle-Calédonie, où nous ne serions plus maîtres des indigènes.

“ Mieux vaudrait n'avoir jamais rien entrepris aux Hébrides, plutôt que d'aboutir à un pareil aveu d'impuissance.

“ Au point où en sont les choses, il n'y a plus, pour la France, qu'une solution conforme à son honneur, à sa dignité, à ses intérêts : *c'est la prise de possession.*

“ Nous vous prions, M. le Gouverneur, de vouloir bien transmettre à M. le Ministre de la Marine et des Colonies ces observations, que nous inspire un patriotisme éclairé par une connaissance exacte des faits et des choses de ce pays.

“ Nous supplions le Gouvernement de la République d'en finir avec ces attermoiements, ces demi-mesures qui ne profitent qu'à nos concurrents, et de planter une fois pour toutes le drapeau national sur cette terre dont personne ne saurait légitimement nous contester la propriété.

“ Le Gouvernement de la Grande-Bretagne s'est fait un devoir, à propos des Nouvelles-Hébrides, de recueillir les protestations des Colonies Australiennes. Nous avons l'espoir que la France Républicaine écoutera également, dans cette circonstance, la voix de sa colonie, qui sera toujours celle de l'honneur et du patriotisme.

“ Nous sommes avec respect, &c.”

NOUVELLES-HÉBRIDES.—Lorsque les colons de Sandwich ont vu arriver les troupes, leur enthousiasme a été d'autant plus grand qu'ils ont cru d'abord à une prise de possession définitive. Il est vrai que plus tard, quand ils ont appris qu'il ne s'agissait que d'une occupation, cela a jeté un froid. Pourtant, en y réfléchissant, cette occupation ne peut être qu'une prise de possession déguisée. Pour moi surtout, qui ai vu en quoi consiste l'installation des troupes, à Port-Sandwich, cela ne fait pas le moindre doute. On ne saurait admettre, en effet, que le Gouvernement Français ait eu l'idée d'envoyer des soldats dans cette solitude, pour le simple plaisir de leur faire monter la garde devant les cocotiers, au risque de les voir décimer par la fièvre.

On a invoqué, pour justifier cette occupation, la nécessité de protéger la vie des colons Néo-Hébridais contre les indigènes. C'est un argument très habile et il n'y aurait absolument rien à y répondre, s'il existait réellement des colons sur les deux points occupés. À Port-Havannah, passe encore ; il y a, dans cette localité et les environs, des propriétés d'une véritable valeur. Mais à Port-Sandwich ; où il n'existe que le magasin de la compagnie ! Qui nos soldats protégeraient-ils dans un pays où il n'y a personne ?

Nous sommes donc obligés de ne pas accepter cette raison et d'admettre que le Gouvernement, en envoyant des troupes dans cette contrée, a eu en vue autre chose qu'une simple occupation. Ou bien alors il faudrait dire que nos hommes d'État ne savent pas ce qu'ils font ; or, c'est une hypothèse que notre patriotisme ne nous permet même pas d'envisager. Pour moi, l'occupation ne peut pas s'expliquer autrement. En dehors de la prise de possession, je ne vois aucune supposition raisonnable à laquelle on puisse s'arrêter.

Soyons donc tranquilles ; laissons crier nos bons voisins d'Australie ; les Hébrides seront à nous.

Il me reste à parler de ce que j'ai constaté aux Nouvelles-Hébrides au point de vue de la colonisation. J'ai suivi de très près, à bord du “Cagou,” une bonne partie de la côte sud de Mallicolo notamment les Îles Maskelyne, dont j'ai pu admirer la splendide végétation. À Port-Sandwich, je suis descendu à terre, j'ai pénétré sous les bois ; j'ai suivi au retour la chaîne d'îles et d'îlots qui relie Mallicolo à Sandwich ; j'ai traversé cette dernière île à cheval de Port-Havannah à Port-Vila ; j'ai séjourné deux jours sur ce dernier point, que j'avais d'ailleurs visité il y a trois ans et que j'ai parcouru à peu près dans tous les sens. Je crois donc avoir une idée assez exacte de ces îles, et je déclare que tout ce qu'on écrit sur leur richesse n'a rien d'exagéré.

Il est vrai que le nord de l'Île Sandwich, à partir de Port-Havannah, est moins riche que le sud. Il y a, dans cette île, deux régions distinctes ; le sud est couvert de forêts magnifiques, indice d'une terre féconde qui n'attend que le travail du cultivateur pour produire d'abondantes récoltes. On ne saurait rien trouver de plus beau que la Plaine de Mélé où sont établis les concessionnaires

de la Société de Colonisation et la Vallée de Lacol, où la compagnie a des cultures, et où se trouvent aussi des concessionnaires.

Le nord de l'île est d'un aspect plus pauvre, les forêts y sont rares. Le sol est généralement couvert de pâturages qui se prêteraient parfaitement à l'élevage du bétail. Ces pâturages se composent principalement d'herbe canaque; on m'a assuré que l'herbe à piquants, qui s'est opposée si longtemps à l'élevage du mouton en Calédonie, n'existait pas aux Hébrides. Il y a d'ailleurs à Port Havannah des troupeaux de bœufs appartenant à la compagnie et à Mr. MacLeod; le bétail m'a paru en très bon état. Cette industrie pourrait recevoir un grand développement, vu la superficie considérable des pâturages qui ne sont pas encore occupés.

À Mallicolo la végétation est encore plus riche qu'à Sandwich; aussi loin que le regard puisse pénétrer, on ne découvre partout qu'une immense nappe de verdure; les cocotiers, dont les cimes dépassent les autres arbres, croissent jusque sur le sommet des coteaux qui bordent le littoral. De distance en distance, un léger panache de fumée vous indique la présence de l'homme; c'est la station d'un fabricant de coprah ou bien c'est une tribu dont les cases se dissimulent dans le feuillage. Les villages sont tous construits à l'ombre de bois énormes; à Port-Sandwich j'ai eu occasion d'en visiter quelques-uns; il n'est pas étonnant que ces malheureux soient si souvent victimes de la fièvre; ils vivent, comme des champignons, au milieu de l'humidité et de la moisissure.

S'il faut en juger par la région que j'ai visitée, on peut dire que Mallicolo n'est qu'une vaste forêt vierge; il en est de même d'ailleurs de la plupart des autres îles de cet archipel; les moindres îlots sont couverts de végétation. Ce pays est appelé incontestablement à un grand développement agricole, et la colonisation y aurait déjà fait des progrès considérables sans les atrocités auxquelles les colons sont exposés de la part des indigènes.

On en trouve la preuve à l'île Sandwich où les indigènes vivent depuis longtemps en bonne intelligence avec les blancs. Il y a un noyau sérieux de colonisation; et contrairement à ce qui a lieu dans les autres îles, où il n'y a guère que des fabricants de coprah qui se contentent d'exploiter les produits naturels du sol, presque tous les colons établis à Sandwich font de la culture.

Voici leurs noms: À Théomo, dans le sud de l'île; M. Mahé, qui travaille pour le compte de la compagnie. À Port-Vila: MM. Antonio de Baros, originaire de Manille; Jack Rodin, de nationalité Suédoise; Chevillard, Joseph Sablon. Vient ensuite la propriété d'Anabrou, appartenant à la compagnie et ayant comme personnel MM. A. Bernier, Directeur, Louvet, Dijour et Hennequin fils, employés dans la Vallée de Lacol; Pierre Kichenin, Indien; et Maïboi, Cafre; à Mélé, MM. Sicard, Paugam, Mitard, et Klein; ces trois derniers sont des immigrants de la Société Française de Colonisation; à Touqoutou, M. Heunequin père; à Port-Havannah, MM. MacLeod et Prévéraud, qui font du commerce et de l'élevage, le premier pour son compte, le second pour compte de la compagnie; dans le nord, Mr. Glisson, de nationalité Anglaise (dead).

Je n'ai pas eu le temps malheureusement de visiter tous ces colons; je regrette surtout de n'avoir pas vu l'installation des immigrants expédiés par la Société Française de Colonisation; c'est une expérience qui mériterait, en effet, d'être suivie de près; mais il m'a été permis de m'entretenir avec plusieurs des plus anciens, et j'ai pu constater que tous étaient, en général, très satisfaits de leur situation. Je n'ai pas vu un seul de ces colons qui ait exprimé le regret de s'être établi aux Hébrides. Pourrait-on en dire autant des colons de la Nouvelle-Calédonie?

J. BERNIER.

## Enclosure 2.

The COLONIAL OFFICE to the AGENT-GENERAL.

SIR,—

Downing Street, 18th November, 1886.

With reference to previous correspondence relating to the question of the transportation of French *récidivistes* to New Caledonia, I am directed by Mr. Secretary Stanhope to transmit to you, for your information, a copy of a despatch received at the Foreign Office from Mr. Egerton, dated the 4th October, 1886, together with copy of one addressed to Mr. Egerton by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs on the same subject, dated the 9th ultimo. These papers are communicated to you on the distinct understanding that they are treated confidentially, and are not to be published. Copies of these have also been sent to the Governors of the Australasian Colonies for the information of their Governments on the same understanding.

I am to enclose, for your information, a copy of a letter addressed to this office by the Agent-General for Victoria, dated the 1st September last.

I am, &c.,

The Agent-General for New Zealand.

JOHN BRAMSTON.

## Sub-Enclosures.

MY LORD,—

Paris, 4th October, 1886.

When the Budget of the Colonies was examined by the Budget Committee three days ago the report was in favour of considerable reductions in the vote for the transportation of relapsed criminals (*récidivistes*). The Committee pronounced itself against sending the relapsed criminals to New Caledonia as proposed by the Government and in favour of Guyana instead, the reason for this being that it was undesirable to add to the large number of the transported convicts now in New Caledonia.

Your Lordship is aware that the opinion of the Committee does not necessarily affect the decision of the Government, and M. Charner, whom I say to-day, confirmed this, explaining that though the Government might take note of the opinion of a Committee, it was not bound by it, and it had been decided by the Ministry of Marine to send a certain number of *récidivistes* to the

Island of Pines. I write this as it is not to be assumed, from mention that may be made in the newspapers of this report of the Committee, that a change of the Government plan is to be made.

Earl of Iddesleigh, G.C.B., &c.

I have, &c.,

E. H. EGERTON.

SIR,—

Foreign Office, 9th October, 1886.

With reference to your despatch No. 515 of the 4th instant, I transmit herewith a copy of letter from the Colonial Office stating that the Agents-General from Queensland and Victoria have strongly urged that Her Majesty's Government should continue to protest against the despatch by the French Government of relapsed criminals to the Pacific, and enclosing a copy of a letter from Sir Graham Berry on the subject. I have to request that you will take a convenient opportunity of communicating Sir Graham Berry's letter to M. de Freycinet, and that you will at the same time observe that any steps which the French Government might take in the direction indicated by the Australian colonists would greatly facilitate the settlement of other questions in which they are interested.

I have, &c.,

E. H. Egerton, Esq., C.B., &c.

IDDESLEIGH.

The AGENT-GENERAL, Victoria, to the UNDER-SECRETARY of STATE, Colonial Office.  
SIR,— Victoria Office, 8, Victoria Chambers, London, S.W., 1st September, 1886.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of yesterday's date, enclosing copy of a despatch from Lord Lyons to the Earl of Rosebery, dated Paris, 12th July, and I note further the promise that copies of the same despatch will be duly forwarded to the Governors of the Australasian Colonies.

I have to request that you will convey to Mr. Secretary Stanhope the expression of my deep regret that the French Government persists in a course of action so detrimental to the interests of the colony I represent, and this, notwithstanding the concurrence of opinion both in England and the colonies that the transportation of relapsed criminals to the neighbourhood of the populous and prosperous communities of Australasia, forming as they do no inconsiderable part of the British Empire, is an unjustifiable proceeding.

That this view is fully justified is further proved by that portion of the despatch which says that if the proposal recently made to Her Majesty's Government by M. Waddington had been accepted, then transportation of French criminals to the Pacific would have altogether ceased. The proposal here alluded to is, of course, the annexation of the New Hebrides by France. Inasmuch as these islands are in the Pacific, it is clear that their annexation by France would not in the least have assisted that Government towards dealing with the large numbers of habitual criminals which is the professed difficulty in the case. Thus, though joined in the despatch under discussion, there exists no reasonable connection between the transportation of *récidivistes* to New Caledonia and the annexation of the New Hebrides. Each question should be dealt with on its merits, and therefore my Government has always declined to complicate the clear and separate issue involved in each.

I further regret the decision arrived at by the French Government, inasmuch as it is calculated to embitter the relations between France and the Australasian Colonies. It is well known, and even admitted by French authorities, that, without extension of territory in the Pacific, it is impossible to retain many more convicts in New Caledonia than now exist there; and consequently the French possessions can only be regarded as the first landing-place, and eventually these sweepings of the French prisons will be precipitated on Australian shores. This is no light or fanciful danger, and it must be evident that the Governments of the various Australasian Colonies will be bound to take effectual measures to defend the populations from that moral contamination which otherwise would be the inevitable result.

I desire to thank the Secretary of State for the exertions already made to prevent this gross wrong; but I would also express the hope that Her Majesty's Government may yet be able to make such representations to the Government of France as will induce it to reconsider its determination in this matter, and refrain from a course of action which is calculated so deeply to offend and irritate a friendly Power.

I have, &c.,

The Under-Secretary of State, Colonial Office.

GRAHAM BERRY.

### No. 33.

EXTRACT from Letter from the PREMIER to the AGENT-GENERAL, 24th November, 1886.

\* \* \* \* \*

"9. I now come to the question of New Hebrides. I am certain France does not intend to remove her soldiers or to abandon her position. The arrangement on the lines proposed by me seems not likely to be brought about. Is there no chance of a compromise? If England obtained the islands on which the Presbyterian mission was planted, and France was allowed to possess Mallicolo and the other islands on which no English missionaries have laboured, France giving Rapa to us, and making the pledge about not sending the *récidivistes*, there might be, I think, a chance of such a settlement being accepted.

"10. If the reports of what the German warship 'Albatross' did to the islanders of Mallicolo are true, then it is high time, in the interests of humanity, that the islands should be in the hands of some civilized power. To turn gatling guns, &c., on men, women, and children who may have done no wrong is a peculiar proceeding for a State calling herself civilized.

"I have, &c.,

"ROBERT STOUT."