

The attitude of the French towards Mr. Jones has been from the very first absolutely unpardonable. Mr. Jones had held his station for a quarter of a century; he had made himself one of the most popular white men in the Western Pacific: but his very success has caused his downfall. For many years the French authorities have bullied and harrassed him beyond endurance, and the result is that the island is divided into two hostile camps, and the followers of the Roman Catholic priests and those of the Protestant missionary have for years been openly at war. Between my first and second visit to the island a pitched battle was fought and twenty-one people were killed. It was sadly evident that all the zeal and religious ardour which Mr. Jones had instilled during twenty years of labour was ready on the slightest provocation to break out into fierce hostility.

With such a condition of things upon a small island Mr. Jones's expulsion was a foregone conclusion. I only wonder that he has remained so long. He was far too powerful a rival for any petty French resident to tolerate. Had the authorities in New Caledonia treated him well, he would have made Maré their most valuable dependency. Having treated him infamously, their only course was to get rid of him. For us there is no redress and no remedy. He cannot be reinstated. One thing only we can do, and it is this: We can learn a lesson we sorely need to learn. We must keep our wits a little more about us, and not again allow ourselves to become so engrossed in party squabbles that any French Foreign Minister of six weeks' experience can checkmate us in three moves.

Yours, &c.,

The Priory, Huntingdon, 22nd December.

WALTER COOTE.

[Extract from the *Times*, Wednesday, 28th December, 1887.]

#### THE FRENCH AND THE LOYALTY ISLANDS.

*To the Editor of the Times.*

SIR,—

The attention of the Aborigines Protection Society was called in the early part of 1885 to the persecutions which were then taking place in the Loyalty Islands. At Maré two native Protestant pastors were imprisoned, a native teacher was brutally treated by the soldiers, and the alphabet cards used in the instruction of the native children were publicly burned. A member of our committee (Mr. A. McArthur, M.P.) communicated these and similar facts to the French Protestant Missionary Society in Paris; and in his letter he said, "We had hoped that under the Republic complete religious freedom would be established in the French dominions, and that whether men were Roman Catholics or Protestants they would be at liberty to worship the Almighty according to the dictates of their own conscience." The Paris society took up the matter, and, headed by its President, M. le Baron Bussière, waited upon M. de Freycinet, who was then Minister for Foreign Affairs, in order to ask him to interfere for the protection of religious liberty. In his reply M. de Freycinet declared himself persuaded of the truth of the evidence upon which the allegations depended, and promised that he would take such action that "even the public opinion of foreigners would be convinced of the good intentions of the Government."

We believe that in consequence of M. de Freycinet's interference the persecutions—at least for a time—ceased, and Mr. Jones was left at peace. I have no doubt that when the fact of his expulsion from the islands in which he has done such good work for so many years past comes before Professor de Pressensé and his colleagues of the Paris committee they will be perfectly willing to repeat the service which they rendered two or three years ago. Unfortunately, the changes of Ministry in France are so frequent that the authority of the Government has been perceptibly weakened at the extremities of the empire, and thus orders sent from Paris in perfect good-faith are apt to be variously interpreted by the servants of the Republic in remote parts of the world.

I am, &c.,

F. W. CHESSON.

Aborigines Protection Society, Broadway Chambers, Westminster, 22nd December.

[Extract from the *Times*, Thursday, 29th December, 1887.]

#### THE FRENCH IN THE PACIFIC.

Auckland, 28th December.

INTELLIGENCE received here from Raiatea, in the Society group, dated the 17th instant, states that the commander of a French naval force of three war-vessels then stationed there had issued an *ultimatum* summoning the rebel natives to submit to King Tamatoa, whom the French were supporting. British interests were not being interfered with.

Evening.

Later intelligence received here states that the French have virtually annexed Raiatea. A number of the chief men of the island refused to submit, whereupon the gunboat "Scorpion" bombarded the hostile villages, and landed a party to destroy them. The French Commander also issued a proclamation stating that the natives would be fined unless they submitted by a certain date.

[Extracts from the *Times*, Friday, 30th December, 1887.]

#### THE FRENCH IN THE PACIFIC.

Paris, 29th December.

No confirmatory intelligence has been received at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in reference to the news which has reached Auckland of the bombardment of the Island of Raiatea by the French gunboat "Scorpion."

The *Temps* this evening, referring to the news of the annexation of Raiatea, recalls the fact that that island, which was definitively ceded to France by the New Hebrides Convention, has been virtually annexed to France since 1878. The journal further declares that the recent disturbances