

SESS. II.—1884.
NEW ZEALAND.

CONFEDERATION AND ANNEXATION.

LORD DERBY'S DESPATCH RESPECTING
A FEDERAL COUNCIL AND NEW GUINEA PROTECTORATE,
AND CORRESPONDENCE RELATING THERETO.

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

No. 1.

The SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES to the GOVERNOR of NEW ZEALAND.
(New Zealand.—No. 26.)

SIR,—

Downing Street, 9th May, 1884.

Her Majesty's Government have not lost sight of the resolutions adopted by the Convention of representatives of the Australasian Colonies at Sydney in December last, and have considered the provisions of the draft Bill for constituting a Federal Council, which the representatives pledged themselves to submit to the Legislatures of their respective colonies. I had been led to believe that addresses in favour of this Bill would be adopted by the Colonial Legislatures in time to enable Her Majesty's Government to introduce the measure during the present session of Parliament with a good prospect of its being passed; but the necessary action does not appear to have been yet taken in any colony. As, therefore, the probability of legislation during this year is diminishing, it appears desirable to consider the position of Her Majesty's Government and of the Colonial Governments in regard to the proposals of the Convention.

2. I had explained in my despatch of the 11th July, 1883, to the Administrator of the Government of Queensland, which was before the Convention, that, in order to place Her Majesty's Government in a position to consider proposals for the protection or government of New Guinea or other places in the Western Pacific Ocean, it was desirable for the Australasian Colonies to combine together effectively, and provide the cost of carrying out any policy which it might be decided to adopt; and that, in the meantime, Her Majesty's Government must continue to decline proposals for large annexations of territory adjacent to Australia; adding, that if a reasonable annual sum were provided by the colonies, Her Majesty's Government would be prepared to strengthen the naval force on the Australian Station, and make the High Commissionership more effective.

3. The Convention does not appear to have taken this part of my despatch into consideration, but it agreed that the Governments represented at it should recommend their respective Legislatures to make permanent provisions, in proportion to population, for the cost of the policy advocated, namely:—

- (1.) To check, in whatever manner might be deemed wisest and most effectual, the further acquisition of dominion in the Pacific, south of the equator, by any Foreign Power;
- (2.) To secure the incorporation with the British Empire of so much of New Guinea and the small islands adjacent thereto as is not claimed by the Government of the Netherlands; and
- (3.) To acquire, if possible, the control of the New Hebrides, in the interests of Australasia.

The Legislature of Queensland has recorded its entire concurrence in these resolutions; but no colony has taken measures to provide the requisite funds, as suggested by the Convention.

4. As, therefore, in the absence of any joint action by the colonies, Her Majesty's Government are not in a position to deal with those questions of policy to which I have referred, and some further delay seems unavoidable, it may be desirable that your Government should consider, with the Governments of the other Australasian Colonies, whether there may not be advantage in making provision for the intervening period in the manner suggested by me in paragraph 7 of my despatch of July 11th last to Sir A. H. Palmer. As I then stated, Her Majesty's Government