

promise that nothing should be done by Her Majesty's Government to change the existing engagements between England and France without previous consultation with the colonies. An event of some importance, however, had happened within the last few days: the French Ambassador, in a conversation with Lord Rosebery, had made a proposal that, if France were permitted to annex the New Hebrides, transportation to any French possession in the Pacific should entirely cease. Lord Rosebery had replied that Her Majesty's Government had promised not to take any step regarding these islands except after consultation with the Australasian Governments, which was quite recognized by Mr. Waddington; and it was therefore necessary that the offer now made on the part of France should be brought to the cognizance of the colonies. This should be done by a confidential telegram from the Agents-General to their Governments, with the request that the views of the latter should be communicated to the Colonial Office as soon as possible. Of course, if the offer of the French Government were entertained, adequate steps would be taken to secure the missions against injury, and to extend to British subjects generally full protection for settlement and trade, as had been done in the case of Raiatea.

The Agents-General thanked Lord Granville for the promise he had been pleased to give, which they did not doubt would be satisfactory to all their Governments; and they engaged to telegraph at once the important proposal just made by the French Ambassador. In taking leave, they desired to express their thanks for the patience and courtesy Lord Granville had shown to them during the interview.

No. 36.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the PREMIER.

SIR,—

7, Westminster Chambers, London, S.W., 25th March, 1886.

In your telegram of the 19th instant, respecting the New Hebrides, you desired me to obtain **No. 17** an answer from the Colonial Office as to their intentions regarding Rarotonga; but I am not able to send you an answer yet, as the question is still under consideration.

In the meanwhile, however, I ascertained that, with regard to the small Kermadec group of islands, to the north of New Zealand, there would be no objection to their immediate annexation to New Zealand, if a formal request to that effect were transmitted by the Governor to the Secretary of State. I accordingly sent you a telegram to that effect, copy of which is annexed; and upon receiving your reply this morning, pointing out that the Governor had already made the desired demand in His Excellency's Despatch No. 121, of the 18th November last, I communicated privately **A.—1, No. 10** with the Colonial Office to ascertain whether anything else was now required, but have not yet had a reply.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

F. D. BELL.

Enclosure 1.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the PREMIER.

. . . . KERMADECS: Would annex upon formal request Governor. Rarotonga still being discussed.

19th March, 1886.

F. D. BELL.

Enclosure 2.

The PREMIER to the AGENT-GENERAL.

KERMADEC: Governor already asked annexation — Despatch 121, 18th November. Is more required?

24th March, 1886.

ROBERT STOUT.

No. 37.

The MODERATOR of the ASSEMBLY of the PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH of NEW ZEALAND to the PREMIER.

SIR,—

Sydenham, 24th April, 1886.

I have the honour to transmit the accompanying resolutions, which I trust shall receive the favourable attention of your Government.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. Robert Stout, Premier of New Zealand.

T. R. CAIRNS,

Moderator of Assembly.

Enclosure 1.

St. Andrew's Church, Auckland, Tuesday, 6th April, 1886.

WHICH day the Presbytery of Auckland met and was constituted.

Inter alia: On the motion of Thomas Peacock, Esq., M.H.R., it was resolved, "That the Presbytery views with great regret and dissatisfaction the announcement that the Imperial authorities are entertaining the question of allowing France to take possession of the New Hebrides Islands, and that the Agent-General of this colony in London is represented as favourable to this procedure." "That, considering the lives sacrificed and the large sums of money spent in missionary operations on these islands by the Presbyterian Churches of Australia and New Zealand, and the success which has attended these labours in christianizing and elevating the native population, and rendering life and property comparatively safe, and, further, that the controlling of these fertile islands by a foreign Power would be likely to neutralize the beneficent efforts put forth, as well as act