

prejudicially to the interests of British commerce and colonization, this Presbytery urges upon the Government of New Zealand the necessity of taking a firm stand and supporting the other Australasian Governments who are now protesting against such annexation by France." "That a copy of the foregoing resolutions be forwarded to the Very Reverend the Moderator of the General Assembly for immediate transmission to the Government, either singly or conjointly with other representations from southern portions of the Church."

Extracted from the records of the Presbytery of Auckland by

ROBT. SOMMERVILLE, Presbytery Clerk.

Enclosure 2.

RESOLUTIONS regarding the Annexation of the New Hebrides by France, adopted by the Presbytery of Christchurch at a Meeting held on the 21st April, 1886.

"THAT the Presbytery, having had its attention called to the fact that the Imperial Government was likely to look with favour on the annexation of the New Hebrides by France, although the Australasian colonists have always been led to suppose that the independence of the islands would be maintained, resolves that the Government of New Zealand be earnestly requested to join with the other Australasian Governments in a vigorous protest against the annexation, and to use all constitutional means to prevent its accomplishment." And, "That the Government of New Zealand be respectfully informed that the Presbyterian Churches have maintained missionaries on several of these islands for many years at very considerable expense; that the missionaries have been very successful in their labours, and, in addition to preaching the Gospel, have given much attention to the education of the people and the introduction among them of the habits and customs of civilized society, one result of which has been a considerable amount of produce exported from the islands; and that the Presbytery is satisfied that, even though the promise by France of not sending convicts to the islands were carried out, the annexation would be disastrous to the work from which such satisfactory results are being secured."

No. 38.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the PREMIER.

(Telegram.)

RAROTONGA, I believe, annexed, provided Hebrides question settled; but, while France continues prohibited annexing Hebrides, England cannot annex new groups, except Kermadecs, where Admiral now ordered hoist flag, and, when Parliament address Queen, added New Zealand. Hebrides—Lord Granville sending despatch, Governors favour accepting French offer. I believe attitude Sydney hastening decision. Can you arrange 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 safeguard religious freedom and protection missions; fourth, Rapa ceded; fifthly, Rarotonga annexed.

24th April, 1886.

F. D. BELL.

No. 39.

The PREMIER to the AGENT-GENERAL.

(Telegram.)

NEW HEBRIDES: Must defer answering telegram few days. Consulting Presbyterians, try obtain consent.

27th April, 1886.

ROBERT STOUT.

No. 40.

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

REVEREND SIR,—

Premier's Office, Wellington, New Zealand, 27th April, 1886.

No. 37.

1. I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 24th instant, enclosing resolutions passed by the Presbyteries of Auckland and Christchurch on the subject of the proposed annexation of the New Hebrides by France. In reply, I desire to bring before you the position of the question in order that you may submit it to the Presbyteries of your Church.

2. I have first to state that the Government have continually opposed the acquisition by foreign Powers of any of the Pacific Islands. On numerous occasions they have, by memoranda to His Excellency the Governor, and by letters to the Agent-General, protested against such acquisition.

3. The Government recognize the great efforts that have been made by the Presbyterian Church in the New Hebrides group, and are aware that it has made it a practice not to go into a mission-field where other Churches have been at work. They also recognize the sacrifices of valuable lives and of money that the Presbyterian Church has made for the benefit of the inhabitants of these islands. In a letter to the Agent-General, dated the 27th February last, I brought this matter specially before him, in order that he might mention it to the Colonial Office in England.

A.—5, No. 8.

4. You are aware that the negotiation that has been proceeding between France and England does not merely concern the relinquishment of the New Hebrides to France. There is much more involved in the proposal. Of first importance is the question Her Majesty's Government put to the colonies: Do they desire to see the abolition of convictism in the Pacific?