

No. 58.

The CHAMBER of COMMERCE, Invercargill, to the PREMIER.

SIR,—

Chamber of Commerce, Invercargill, 17th May, 1886.

I have the honour to inform you that this Chamber desires to record its protest against the proposed annexation of the New Hebrides Islands by France, and would urge the Government to use its influence in preventing any such annexation.

I have, &c.,

CHARLES ROUT,
Secretary.

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

No. 59.

The PREMIER to the AGENT-GENERAL.

SIR,—

Premier's Office, Wellington, 18th May, 1886.

Nos. 32 and 37.

No. 40.

I have the honour to forward for your information the enclosed copies of resolutions which have been passed by the Dunedin Chamber of Commerce, and the Presbyteries of Auckland and Christchurch, on the subject of the proposed annexation of New Hebrides by France. Copies of the resolutions from the Chamber have been forwarded by His Excellency to the Secretary of State for the Colonies. I also enclose copy of a letter I have addressed to the Moderator of the Assembly of the Presbytery of New Zealand in reply to the resolutions of the Presbyteries, and as soon as I am in possession of the determination at which the Church arrives I will again communicate with you.

I have, &c.,

Sir F. Dillon Bell, Agent-General.

ROBERT STOUT.

No. 60.

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

(Telegram.)

FOLLOWING is telegram from Agent-General: "London, 19th May. Had long conversation with Secretary of State for the Colonies, very satisfactory character. He stated that Her Majesty's Government adhered pledge to colonies, and so informed French Ambassador, from the first, French proposal too important to decline without direct reference to colonies. French Ambassador now privately informed no prospect of assenting. Official reply to him will await receipt official despatches from colonies.—GRAHAM BERRY, Agent-General."

Melbourne, 20th May, 1886.

For the Premier,

E. J. THOMAS.

No. 61.

The MODERATOR of PRESBYTERY, Napier, to Captain RUSSELL, M.H.R.

AFTER consideration of the Premier's circular, the Presbytery of Hawke's Bay unanimously agreed strongly to protest against the proposed annexation of the New Hebrides by France as an act of injustice to the natives, as a grave and serious wrong to the cause of our Presbyterian Mission, and as a standing menace to the safety and prosperity of the Colony of New Zealand. Agreed to transmit this minute to Captain Russell for presentation to the Government.

DAVID SIDEX,

Napier, 20th May, 1886.

Moderator of Presbytery.

No. 62.

The CLERK to PRESBYTERY, Dunedin, to the PREMIER.

SIR,—

First Church, Dunedin, 20th May, 1886.

I have the honour, by direction of the Presbytery of Dunedin, to forward the following resolution, which was unanimously adopted by the Presbytery, on the motion of the Rev. W. Will, seconded by Mr. Kirk Ramsay:—

No. 40.

"The Presbytery, having considered the proposals submitted by the Premier anent the annexation of the New Hebrides by France, desires to cordially thank the Premier for his courteous consideration in affording the Presbyterian Church an opportunity of expressing her mind in regard to the great and important interests involved in the proposal to allow France to take possession of the New Hebrides, earnestly hopes that the New Zealand Government may yet see its way to act in cordial co-operation with the Government of Victoria, which has so consistently and forcibly maintained and advocated the righteous claims of the colonies and of the inhabitants of these islands; assures the Premier that the Presbytery cannot for one moment entertain, on any consideration, the idea of jeopardizing the interests of the native population by concurring in the proposal that France should be permitted to extend her sovereignty over the Islands of the New Hebrides; declares its firm conviction that the best way to prevent the importation of French criminals into the islands of the South Seas is not to afford facilities to France for extending her territory in these regions, and its hope that the spirit of freedom which animates the Australasian Colonies will be sufficient to prevent the continuation of convictism in the South Pacific."

I have, &c.,

ALEX. M. FINLAYSON,

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

Presbytery Clerk.