

pose of bringing the natives under the civilizing influences of Christianity; and, being a part of the British nation, she feels that, if not entitled to claim these islands for England, she has, at any rate, a right to demand that they shall not be handed over to a foreign Power.

7. Instead of earning the gratitude of the colonists and their descendants for many generations to come, as indicated in your letter, it is felt that our Church would receive the strongest condemnation of all the other branches of the Christian Church if she consented to an action which would have a most damaging effect on all Christian effort in behalf of heathen nations; for, if, after many years of successful labour in Christianizing and civilizing the inhabitants of a large group of islands, she willingly handed them over to an influence certain to be disastrous to the good results attained, what hope could there be that, under other circumstances, she would be faithful to the great mission with which she has been intrusted.

8. The Church, while deprecating any action that could reasonably be construed into a *causa belli*, is persuaded that a firm protest by the Government against the acquisition of these islands by France is much more likely to preserve peace than any temporizing policy touching their ownership.

While thanking you for your great courtesy and hearty recognition of the Church's interest in the settlement of this question, I beg, for the reasons above stated, and in the name of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand, most respectfully but most emphatically to protest against the annexation by France; and I trust that your Government will unite with the great majority of the Australasian people in their endeavour to preserve the independence of the islands.

The Hon. Robert Stout, Premier.

I have, &c.,
T. R. CAIRNS.

No. 71.

The PREMIER to the CLERK of PRESBYTERIAN SYNOD of OTAGO and SOUTHLAND.

REVEREND SIR,—

Premier's Office, Wellington, 28th May, 1886.

I have been directed by the Hon. the Premier to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the No. 67. 25th instant, enclosing the resolution of the Presbyterian Synod of Otago and Southland on the proposed annexation of the New Hebrides by France, after the consideration of my letter of the 24th ultimo; and to beg that you will be good enough to convey to the Synod Mr. Stout's thanks for the prompt attention they have given to the matter.

Rev. W. Bannerman,
Clerk of Synod, Roslyn, Dunedin.

I am, &c.,
ALEX. WILLIS,
Secretary.

No. 72.

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

REVEREND SIR,—

Premier's Office, Wellington, 28th May, 1886.

I have been directed by the Hon. the Premier to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the No. 70. 27th instant, conveying the decisions at which the various Presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand have arrived as to the proposed annexation of the New Hebrides by France, after consideration of his letter of the 24th ultimo. I am to request you to be good enough to convey No. 40. the thanks of Mr. Stout to the Presbyteries for their prompt attention to the matter.

Rev. T. R. Cairns,
Moderator of the Assembly, Presbyterian Church of New Zealand, Sydenham.

I have, &c.,
ALEX. WILLIS,
Secretary.

No. 73.

The BISHOP of AUCKLAND to the PREMIER.

DEAR MR. STOUT,—

Bishop's Court, Auckland, 25th May, 1886.

I enclose a copy of a resolution which was passed at a meeting of Church of England people last week, and of which I was requested to send you a copy.

Leper Island, one of the islands of the New Hebrides group, has for many years been cared for by our Church of England missionaries, under the direction of Bishops Pattison and Selwyn; and the Banks Islands, close by, are among the most hopeful fields of missionary work at present visited by Bishop John Selwyn.

If the New Hebrides group were to be annexed by France, I fear the Republican Government of that country would not extend to all Christian missions there alike the toleration shown by our Indian Government to missions in Hindostan. Wishing you an interesting and not too laborious session of Parliament,

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

I have, &c.,
W. G. AUCKLAND, Bishop.