

Parliament; and in November the Legislative Council and House of Representatives approved of certain resolutions agreeing generally with the resolutions of the Convention, but, in the case of the Council, stating "that the establishment of such a Federal Council as proposed in the Bill was premature as far as New Zealand was concerned," and the House expressing the opinion "that further negotiations should take place between the Australasian Colonies, and that further consideration of the subject should be postponed until the next session of Parliament." These resolutions were carried as amendments to the proposals of the Government, though the Ministry acquiesced in the amendment made by the House of Representatives. The resolutions proposed were: "That this House agrees generally with the resolutions of the said Convention; but, in order that its views may be specifically expressed, it resolves as follows: (a.) That it approves of the steps taken by the British Government for the establishment of its rule over New Guinea, and hopes that like measures will be taken for a protectorate over the islands of the Pacific Ocean not under the dominion of any stable Government. (b.) That this colony is willing to pay in proportion to its population a share of the sum of £15,000 proposed by the Imperial Government. (c.) That it desires respectfully to protest against the transportation of criminals to the French possessions in the Pacific. (d.) That it requests the British Government to make such representations to the European Powers as will prevent the maintenance of penal establishments in any of the Pacific islands. (e.) That the establishment of such a Federal Council as is proposed in the Convention's draft Bill is premature. (f.) That, so far as the Bill aims at enabling the colonies to jointly initiate legislation on questions of common interest and importance to the several colonies, it has the cordial support of this Council. (g.) That to place the proposed measure in accordance with these opinions it will be necessary to vary the Bill so as to provide—first, that the Federal Council shall not make representations to the Imperial Government direct, but to the several Colonial Governments; second, that any measure it initiates shall not have any force within any colony, nor affect any colony, until it is adopted by the Legislature of such colony." For (e), (f), (g) the amendment before mentioned was substituted by the House of Representatives; and had this amendment not been accepted the whole subject would possibly have been shelved, as was done in the Legislative Council.

7. In a memorandum by Sir Julius Vogel, adopted by the Cabinet, dated the 6th October, 1884, Ministers had stated broadly the objections which presented themselves to the Bill: "(1) That it was a measure calculated to arouse mistrust, because it was impossible to determine what consequence might arise from it; (2) that it either did not aim at Federation or aimed at fastening it on the colonies by gradually and involuntarily committing them to it; (3) that the colonies were not yet sufficiently agreed on vital points to be ready for Federation."

8. In December, 1884, the Bill was amended by the Colonial Office and submitted to the different Australian Governments for consideration; and subsequently considerable correspondence passed between this Government and the Governments of Victoria, New South Wales, and Queensland; and in March last the Premier telegraphed to them and the Agent-General to the effect that "the views of the Government were still the same as had been submitted to the House"—that Ministers "objected to the Bill as altered by the Colonial Office on the ground that it interfered with the autonomy of colonies, and did not allow colonies to reject or adopt laws passed by the Council; but that, until Parliament met, they could not speak authoritatively on the subject." The Agent-General had previously been instructed to request that the consideration of the Bill should be altogether postponed until the colonies were better agreed. On the 30th March the various Agents-General had an interview with the Earl of Derby to discuss the Bill, when the proposed amendments were considered, and the new clause No. 31, which provided that "this Act shall cease to be in operation in respect to any colony the Legislature of which shall have passed an Act or Ordinance declaring that the same shall cease to be in force therein: Provided, nevertheless, that all Acts of the Council passed while this Act was in operation in such colony shall continue to be in force therein, unless altered or repealed by the Council," was strongly opposed by Victoria and Queensland, and supported by New South Wales and this colony; but it was urged by the Agent-General for New Zealand that Lord Derby should reconsider the question so far as to provide that the legislation of the Federal Council might, in case of a colony withdrawing, be repealed by such colony; and this was eventually agreed to by the subsequent addition to the clause of the words "or unless repealed as to such colony by the Legislature thereof." A memorandum from Ministers bearing on the subject was addressed to His Excellency on the 23rd April, and by him transmitted to the Secretary of State for the Colonies on the 12th May.

9. The Bill so altered was introduced into the House of Lords. Ministers were still most solicitous that provision should be made "that all laws passed by the Federal Council should, before having any effect in a colony, have to be approved by the Colonial Legislature;" and cabled and wrote the Agent-General to that effect. Further correspondence passed with the Governments of Victoria and Queensland, in which Ministers expressed the decided opinion that unless their views were adopted this colony must stand aloof from the Bill. The Agent-General also did not cease to urge upon the Colonial Office the desirableness of the suggestion being given effect to, but without avail; and the Bill was finally passed into law, but by the omission in the House of Commons of the power to a withdrawing colony to repeal the legislation of the Federal Council, so that it was made less acceptable to some of the colonies than when it passed the Second Chamber.