

1886.
NEW ZEALAND.

PROPOSED ACQUISITION OF NEW HEBRIDES BY FRANCE

(PAPERS RELATING TO THE).

[In continuation of A.-8a, 1885.]

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

No. 1.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the PREMIER.

PROTOCOL signed Germany France, pledging Germany do nothing prevent France taking Raiatea and Hebrides.

F. D. BELL.

4th February, 1886.

No. 2.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the PREMIER.

SIR,—

7, Westminster Chambers, London, S.W., 12th February, 1886.

On the 1st February a series of White Books was presented to the Reichstag, which had been promised by the German Emperor in his Speech from the throne, on the subject of the colonial policy of the Empire; when it transpired that a protocol had been signed between the French and German Governments, pledging Germany to do nothing to prevent France from taking possession not only of Raiatea, but of the New Hebrides: I hoped to have received a copy of the White Book containing this protocol in time to send you authentic particulars to-day, but it has not yet come from Berlin. I enclose, however, an extract from the *Times*, in which the clause relating to those groups is said to be in the following terms: "The Government of the Emperor undertakes to the French Government to do nothing which may hinder the eventual taking into possession by France of the isles and islets forming the group called 'Îles sous le Vent' (Raiatea, Huahine, and Borabora), and connected with the Archipelago of Tahiti or the Society Islands. It takes the same engagement respecting the New Hebrides Archipelago, situate near New Caledonia. The Government of the Republic, in case of taking possession of either group, undertakes to respect all rights acquired by German subjects, especially as regards the enlistment of Native labourers, and to come to an agreement to this effect with the Imperial Government." I sent you a telegram on the 4th instant containing the gist of this protocol.

The Federal Council having resolved to address the Queen praying that no change should be made in the agreement now subsisting between England and France respecting the New Hebrides, my colleagues the other Agents-General have been instructed to press the desire of all the colonies on Her Majesty's Government; and a meeting of the Agents-General, including the High Commissioner for Canada, took place yesterday, when we agreed to ask for an interview with Lord Granville, in order to make a general representation to his Lordship on the present state of affairs affecting that group.

As I may perhaps be called upon to initiate the discussion with Lord Granville, and to prepare any paper which his Lordship may require us to send in afterwards, I am deferring for the present what I should otherwise have said to you to-day. But I do not like a mail to leave without mentioning that Mr. Garrick told us, at our meeting yesterday, that, in compliance with instructions from Mr. Griffith, he had just sent in a letter to the Colonial Office, containing an expression to the effect that "the loyalty of the colonies might be affected" if the Imperial Government gave up the New Hebrides to France. Although I feel perfectly sure that any language bearing even the appearance of a menace of that kind would meet with no sympathy from the people of New Zealand, I have not thought it right on that account to separate myself from concerted action with my colleagues for an interview with Lord Granville.

The sudden downfall of Lord Salisbury's Government prevented Colonel Stanley from giving me the formal interview he had promised on the general question of the Pacific Islands; but Lord Granville will presently receive me thereon. In the meantime, having had some reason to think