

1886.
NEW ZEALAND.

PROPOSED ACQUISITION OF NEW HEBRIDES BY FRANCE

(FURTHER PAPERS RELATING TO THE).

[In Continuation of A.—5A, 1886.]

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

No. 55.

The SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES to the GOVERNOR.

SIR,—

Downing Street, 22nd April, 1886.

I have the honour to transmit to you, for your information and that of your Government, a copy of a letter which I have caused to be addressed to the Agents-General for the Australasian Colonies respecting the negotiations between Her Majesty's Government and the French Government with regard to the New Hebrides.

Governor Sir W. F. D. Jervois, G.C.M.G., C.B., &c.

I have, &c.,
GRANVILLE.

Enclosure.

The COLONIAL OFFICE to the AGENTS-GENERAL for the AUSTRALASIAN COLONIES.

SIR,—

Downing Street, 22nd April, 1886.

I am directed by Earl Granville to inform you that he has under his careful consideration the expressions of opinion which have been communicated to him by some of the Australian Governments upon the proposal which has been made to Her Majesty's Government by the French Government respecting the New Hebrides, and that his Lordship desires that you should understand the reasons for which Her Majesty's Government has thought it desirable, in the interests of the Australasian Colonies, that this proposal should be fully considered.

The French Government have explained that a further supply of labour must be provided for their islands in the Western Pacific, and that for this purpose they must send out further convicts, unless they can secure the necessary labour by acquiring the New Hebrides. If this were agreed to, the French Government would not only abstain from sending forward the convicts which they are preparing to send, but would cease at once, and permanently, to transport convicts to the Western Pacific. The result which the colonists have very strongly and repeatedly urged Her Majesty's Government to secure, as being of the highest importance to the welfare of Australasia, can thus be now attained.

I am to enclose a note from M. Waddington, which shows the objects and intentions of the French Government in this matter.

You will no doubt readily understand that, in the event of Her Majesty's Government rejecting, at the instance of some of the Australian Governments, this offer to discontinue transportation, especially if that offer should be accompanied, as the Government of New Zealand, supported by that of New South Wales, urges that it should be, by an offer of the cession of Rapa, the position of Her Majesty's Government in pressing hereafter the objections of the colonies to the transportation of convicts to French soil would be much weakened.

I am also to observe that, as the French Government will certainly not consent to the establishment of the authority of any other Power in the New Hebrides, which form a part of the same geographical group with New Caledonia and the Loyalty Islands, and in which French enterprise has made considerable progress, there is little chance of such a modification of the existing agreement so as to insure the New Hebrides becoming a British possession; and that if satisfactory facilities for trade and adequate securities for religious freedom can be obtained, as well as the total cessation of the transportation of convicts by France to the Pacific, together with the cession of Rapa, such an arrangement would seem to be to the advantage of the Australasian Colonies.

A copy of this letter will be forwarded to the Governors of the Australasian Colonies by the next mail.

The Agents-General for the Australasian Colonies.

I have, &c.,
J. BRAMSTON.

Sub-Enclosure.

M. WADDINGTON to the Earl of ROSEBURY.

MY LORD,—

French Embassy, 6th March, 1886.

I was happy to be able to announce to you in our conversation of yesterday that my Government, in deference to the opinion you had expressed—an opinion which, owing to your profound knowledge of Australia, possesses a particular value—and with the object of facilitating the negotiations regarding the New Hebrides, had decided to adjourn the despatch of the *récidivistes* to the Isle of Pines until the replies from the Australian Colonies were received.

I added that we would not be able to transport them to other places, both on account of the preparation required, and that the French Chamber would certainly not grant the necessary credit for the construction of penitentiary establishments if the free possession of the New Hebrides was not previously assured to the Government of the Republic.

I explained, besides, that the execution of the law respecting the *récidivistes* was daily becoming more pressing, and that we could not without much difficulty defer the projected shipment beyond the end of April.

I then reviewed with your Lordship the different elements of the question, insisting, above all, on the three following points:—

- (1.) New Caledonia has need of colonists, and we hope that the *récidivistes* will furnish a certain quantity. If this resource is cut off, the New Hebrides alone can supply labour in sufficient quantity.
- (2.) The Australians have no need of new territory, whilst they desire a guarantee against the infusion among them of foreign criminals.
- (3.) For a great Power it is always a serious thing to divest itself of a portion, however small, of its sovereign rights, and in consenting to this sacrifice we make a great concession with the view of preserving and of developing good relations between Australia and our colonies of the Pacific.

Your Lordship was good enough to be satisfied with my communication which responded to the wish of the Government of Her Majesty the Queen. I have not failed, in compliance with your request, to convey your thanks to M. de Freycinet.

Your Lordship told me, in conclusion, that telegrams had already been sent to Australia to hasten the despatch of the expected replies, and we agreed to renew the negotiations as soon as these replies were known.

The Right Hon. the Earl of Rosebery.

I have, &c.,

WADDINGTON.

No. 56.

The SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES to the GOVERNOR.

SIR,—

Downing Street, 22nd April, 1886.

With reference to previous correspondence respecting the transportation of *récidivistes* to the Western Pacific, I have the honour to acquaint you, for the information of your Government, that a letter has been received in this department from the Foreign Office, from which it appears that the French Government have undertaken to postpone their proposed action in this matter until an answer should have been received by Her Majesty's Government from the Australasian Colonies on the subject of the New Hebrides, which Lord Rosebery had stated might be expected to arrive towards the end of April.

I take this opportunity of informing you that in the *Journal Officiel* of the 11th ultimo a Presidential Decree was published; appointing a Commission de Classement for the execution of the habitual criminals deportation law. The duties of this Commission will be to give its opinion on cases of *récidivistes* to be granted the privilege of individual relegation, on those of *récidivistes* to be exempted from relegation on the score of illness or infirmity, and on the designation of the territory to which each *récidiviste* subjected to collective relegation shall be sent, or of the colony or French possession in which each *récidiviste* allowed the privilege of individual relegation shall be obliged to reside.

I have, &c.,

Governor Sir W. F. D. Jervois, G.C.M.G., C.B., &c.

ROBERT W. HERBERT,
(For Earl Granville.)

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