

their belief, have grown out of the convict settlements in Norfolk Island and Tasmania. The latter theory is a familiar blunder, which the colonists are always repelling with natural indignation; but it seems to have become inveterate in the French mind. A fresh example of it occurs this morning in the letter of M. Maquet, quoted by our correspondent, Mr. Hogan.

Meantime, the practical question of what is to be done in regard to the New Hebrides remains where it was. That it should do so is not to the credit of France, who in this matter has shown herself singularly wanting in respect for her own pledges. It is well known that, since 1878, England and France have been under a mutual engagement not to annex the New Hebrides; but for nearly two years the islands have been occupied by French troops. The reason given by the French Government is that outrages were committed upon French subjects in 1885. Speaking in the House of Lords last May, Lord Salisbury used the words: "They—the French Government—have assured us, in tones whose earnestness and sincerity we have no right to doubt, that they have no intention of permanently occupying those islands, and that no definitive character ought to be attached to their action." Since then there have been consultations and correspondence between the two Governments, but no hint of evacuation on the part of France. The consequence is that the Australian Colonies are gravely dissatisfied; nor is it any secret that, although a report of the discussion does not appear in the blue-book of the Colonial Conference, very animated debates took place on the New Hebrides question at some of the meetings of the delegates. The contention of our correspondent, Mr. Hogan, is the contention of the people of Australia almost without exception—that they protest most strongly against the establishment by France of any new penal colonies in the Western Pacific. The convicts have a trick of escaping; they land in Australia in no small numbers; and Australia does not like it. It is doubtless the case that France has some ulterior motive in keeping her troops in the New Hebrides and in deferring a settlement of the question; she hopes in this way to help us to a settlement such as she would like of the still more important Egyptian question. But whether these are tactics worthy of a great nation is a matter on which we should imagine that there can hardly be two opinions.

[Extract from the *Times*, Tuesday, 6th September, 1887.]

ANGLO-FRENCH QUESTIONS.

Paris, 5th September.

. . . A SPEEDY agreement on the New Hebrides question is also looked for after the diplomatic recess.

[Extract from the *Times*, Thursday, 8th September, 1887.]

ANGLO-FRENCH QUESTIONS.

Paris, 7th September.

THE *Débats*, a Foreign Office organ, plainly states that France will not evacuate the New Hebrides until England has given way on the Suez Canal question. As to the latter, it adds that England has conceded three points—namely, the appointment of an International Commission, periodical meetings of that body, and the presidency of the oldest member of it. A fourth point remains, on which a speedy agreement is hoped for. France proposes that the Commission shall fix the area alongside the Canal within which the erection of fortifications and the concentration of troops shall be forbidden.

[Extract from the *Standard*, Thursday, 8th September, 1887.]

ENGLAND AND FRANCE.

(Through Reuter's Agency.)

Paris, 7th September,

THE *Journal des Débats* this evening, referring to the New Hebrides question, says that an understanding had already been effected between France and England when the Freycinet Cabinet was in power, but M. Flourens, on assuming office as Minister of Foreign Affairs, refused to sign any agreement relating to the New Hebrides before an arrangement had been come to with England on the subject of the neutralisation of the Suez Canal.

The *Débats* explains the questions in relation to the Suez Canal upon which, in succession, an agreement had been established between Great Britain and France, and states that upon the last point, yet to be settled, M. Waddington, the French Ambassador in London, has submitted to Lord Salisbury a proposal that an International Commission should be appointed to define a zone upon the banks of the Canal within which the construction of fortifications and the concentration of troops shall be forbidden.

[Extract from the *Times*, Saturday, 10th September, 1887.]

THE NEW HEBRIDES.

Paris, 9th September.

THE *Liberté* this evening states that, with a view to the departure of the French troops from the New Hebrides, the French Government has requested information from the Governor of New Caledonia concerning the position of the colonists towards the natives and the measures to be eventually taken for their security.

[Extract from the *Standard*, Monday, 19th September, 1887.]

THE NEW HEBRIDES.

(From our Correspondent.)

Vienna, Sunday night.

ACCORDING to the *Politische*, the impending arrangement between England and France respecting