

follows that things are coming, if they have not come, to that pass in which England is neither valued as a friend nor feared as an enemy. In the present instance there is no question of Continental intervention, or of mixing ourselves up with other men's quarrels. The simple facts are that we thought the independence of the New Hebrides important enough to make a treaty about, but that, when that treaty is violated, we think it prudent to hold our tongues. It is not in Europe only that our action in the matter of the New Hebrides is closely watched. It excites at least as much attention, and far more irritation, in Australia. There is no question upon which the Australians feel so keenly. Rightly or wrongly, they feel that it concerns their whole future as a community. Even if there were no treaty to be invoked, it would be seemly to examine the demands of the colonists in regard to this question with care and sympathy. Then, however, we might say, at the end of the investigation, that we thought their fears unfounded or exaggerated. As it is, any criticism of their fears is out of place. What they ask is not that we should sympathize with their excitement, but simply that we should demand the execution of a specific treaty which was concluded for their benefit, and which they have never consented to waive. That is an awkward request for a Power like England to refuse to colonies like Australia.

There are two steps the English Government might very well take which, though they fall far short of that insistence on the specific performance of the treaty to which the Australians think they are entitled, would yet show the French Government that England is more in earnest than they have been accustomed, perhaps, to think her. In the first, they might refuse, categorically and unmistakably, to discuss any other question in connection with that of the New Hebrides. This would at least show the French Government that we are alive to the special and serious nature of the issue. In the second place, they might despatch to the islands an English force of equal strength with the French force. This would only involve the maintenance there of a hundred men, but it would be an intimation alike to France and to Australia that a French occupation would never be permitted by England. There would be nothing in this to which the French Government could reasonably object, since, if it is not a violation of the treaty for French troops to be in the islands, it must equally be no violation of it for English troops to be there. The advantage of this expedient would be that, as a joint occupation can serve no special French purpose, useful or sentimental, France would no longer have any motive for keeping any soldiers in the islands, since the only result of so doing would be to keep English troops there also. It is an expedient to which no valid objection can well be raised, and which would probably have the effect of bringing to an end the incident which would have provoked it.

No. 8.

TELEGRAM from the SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES to the GOVERNOR of NEW ZEALAND.

(Received 26th October, 1887.)

CONVENTION signed New Hebrides. French undertake to evacuate within four months.

No. 9.

The SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES to the GOVERNOR.

SIR,—

Downing Street, 28th October, 1887.

I have the honour to enclose the draft of the New Hebrides Convention, which, as you will see from M. Flourens's note of the 22nd October instant, has been accepted by the French Government; and I desire to express the satisfaction with which I am thus able to announce to you that this question has been settled.

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

I have, &c.,

H. T. HOLLAND.

Enclosures.

The FOREIGN OFFICE to the COLONIAL OFFICE.

SIR,—

Foreign Office, 24th October, 1887.

With reference to previous correspondence, I am directed by the Marquis of Salisbury to transmit to you herewith, to be laid before the Secretary of State for the Colonies, for his Lordship's information, copies of papers upon the subject of the New Hebrides.

I have, &c.,

JULIAN PAUNCEFOTE.

Sub-Enclosure 1.

The Marquis of SALISBURY to Mr. EGERTON.

SIR,—

Foreign Office, 21st October, 1887.

I enclose to you the draft of a Convention with respect to the New Hebrides, which is the result of the various communications and conversations that have passed upon the subject. The controversy has lasted longer than was anticipated, and has created some disquietude in the minds of Her Majesty's subjects in Australia; and I hope that by accepting the enclosed proposals the French Government may be able to bring it to a satisfactory termination.

In the year 1878 the Marquis d'Harcourt, then French Ambassador at this Court, verbally assured Lord Derby that France entertained no intention of annexing the New Hebrides, and