

France, and which can only end, unless soon met by some reasonable arrangement, in her taking virtual if not formal possession of the group.

Lord Harrowby has given notice in the House of Lords to call attention to the state of affairs in the New Hebrides, and to ask what course is proposed to be taken by Her Majesty's Government.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

F. D. BELL.

No. 5.

The MODERATOR, Presbyterian Church of New Zealand, to the PREMIER.

DEAR SIR,—

Remuera, Auckland, 12th March, 1887.

I have been requested by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand to write you, as Premier, *re* the threatened annexation of the New Hebrides by the French, and to again urge that the influence of the Government of the colony may be used to prevent any such attempt. We are exceedingly grateful for your courtesy and interest as manifested in your letter last year; but our missionaries are anxious that another and even stronger protest should be given against any encroachment by France upon the New Hebrides. The devoted and successful labours of Presbyterian missionaries in those islands during many years are well known, and anything like an annexation by France would, we fear, mean destruction—at least, very great injury—to our missions. The missionaries do not seem to put much emphasis upon the assurances of France that protection would be given to Protestant missions, and believe that French annexation would mean the establishment of Romanism. Be this as it may, there are political reasons why France should not be permitted to annex the New Hebrides. If France owned those islands they would doubtless soon become convict-settlements, and this would be a great calamity to the whole of the Australasian Colonies.

As a Church we have been earnestly watching the course of events, and feel encouraged by the favourable aspect of affairs at present; but it may be at such a juncture that a firm and decided protest by the New Zealand Government against any attempt to take possession of the New Hebrides would strengthen the position of the Home Government.

Thanking you for your former interest, and trusting you will again use your influence in this important matter,

I have, &c.,

G. B. MONRO,

Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand.

Sir R. Stout, Premier of New Zealand.

No. 6.

The PREMIER to the MODERATOR, Presbyterian Church of New Zealand.

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,—

Premier's Office, Wellington, 21st March, 1887.

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 12th March, dealing with the New Hebrides question. I need not say that I exceedingly regret the position into which the New Hebrides question has drifted. I do not see any chance of the islands being annexed to Great Britain, and the solution I think possible now would be for the English Government to try and obtain those islands that have been the seat of the Protestant English mission, leaving to France the other islands.

The way in which British statesmen have during the past fifty years allowed the Pacific Islands question to drift shows that it is hopeless now to expect any vigorous action without provoking hostilities from European Powers.

I have, &c.,

The Rev. G. B. Monro, Moderator, Presbyterian Church
of New Zealand, Remuera, Auckland.

ROBERT STOUT.

No. 7.

The PREMIER, Queensland, to the PREMIER, New Zealand.

SIR,—

Colonial Secretary's Office, Brisbane, 25th July, 1887.

With reference to the letter addressed to you by the Acting Chief Secretary on the 18th of February last, in which was enclosed a copy of the report of Mr. Cecil, the Government Agent of the Queensland labour-vessel "Helena," as to the movements of the French in the New Hebrides, I have the honour to inform you that I have just received the following cable message on the subject of Mr. Cecil's report from our Agent-General in London; "London, 20th July, 1887.—New Hebrides. Flourens told Lyons statements Cecil's letter must be inaccurate, and is inquiring into their truth."

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Premier, New Zealand.

S. W. GRIFFITHS.

No. 8.

The PREMIER to the PREMIER, Queensland.

SIR,—

Premier's Office, Wellington, 23rd August, 1887.

I have the honour to acknowledge, with thanks, the receipt of your letter No. 5649, of the 25th July, forwarding copy of a telegram from the Queensland Agent-General in London on the subject of the New Hebrides.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Premier of Queensland, Brisbane.

P. A. BUCKLEY,
In absence of the Premier.