

appealing to their allies in order to secure the neutrality of the Canal, yet that so long as England continues to occupy Egypt the Convention must remain inoperative. Nevertheless, according to the *Débats*, "The Convention is not useless, as it constitutes a ground for looking forward to the happy issue of future negotiations with England, and furnishes an additional argument for reminding the English that they cannot remain indefinitely on the banks of the Nile. But it is obvious that the Convention would be more valuable if it were immediately applicable, and if Perim were neutral ground."

The sum total is, that M. Flourens has added very materially to his prestige and his popularity by having gained a distinct advantage over England in his negotiations, and having given in exchange only a conditional promise to evacuate the New Hebrides. It may, however, be pointed out that the English negotiator took it for granted that, in exchange for his concessions, the French troops would be removed from the New Hebrides as a matter of course. This has not yet been done, and it remains to be seen what steps have been taken by the French Government to constitute the Commission, the creation of which alone can make the withdrawal of the French troops imperative. In French diplomatic circles it is currently reported that the French will remain in the New Hebrides so long as we remain in Egypt. This does not appear from any document published in the yellow-book; but I have some reason for believing that that is exactly what the French Government mean by establishing what they call a connection between two questions that have really no connection whatever. The presence of the French in the New Hebrides is a matter between England and France; our presence in Egypt is a European question; there is no analogy whatever between the two. The French have had troops in the New Hebrides since 1886. If the French negotiators are in earnest, and acting *bonâ fide*, as we must assume to be the case, by this time the French troops should be withdrawn. If they are kept there on the quibble that the Joint Commission has not been established, the Australian Colonies will have good reason to complain.

[Extract from the *Times*, Monday, 9th January, 1888.]

THE NEW HEBRIDES CONVENTION.

Paris, 7th January.

THE *note verbale* of the 24th October, 1885, which is referred to in the New Hebrides Convention, renews to the English Government the assurance that the Customs regulations to be established at Raiatea and the other Leeward Islands will be the same as exist at Tahiti. British subjects will therefore enjoy the same treatment as French subjects. The note also declares that there is no intention to depart, in respect of Raiatea and the other islands, from the decision not to send any convicts to the French possessions in the Society group.

No. 12.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the PREMIER.

SIR,—

7, Westminster Chambers, London, S.W., 22nd February, 1888.

Enclosure to
No. 9.

I beg to enclose a parliamentary paper just issued, relating to the New Hebrides Convention, containing the declaration signed at Paris on the 26th January between the French and English Governments for constituting a Joint Naval Commission in the islands, and the regulations adopted for the guidance of that Commission.

I am preparing for you a report of a long interview I had at the beginning of this month with the Secretary of State in relation to these regulations, and other matters concerning the present position of affairs in the Western Pacific; but it may be some time before I am able to send it to you.

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

F. D. BELL.

Enclosures.

ANNEX.—DECLARATION referred to in Articles I. and V. of the CONVENTION.

Declaration of the Plenipotentiaries of Great Britain and France, acknowledging the Independence of the Islands of Huahine, Raiatea, and Borabora, and of the small Islands adjacent thereto, signed at London, 19th June, 1847.

HER Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and His Majesty the King of the French, being desirous of removing a cause of discussion between their respective Governments relative to the islands in the Pacific Ocean which are hereinafter designated, have thought proper reciprocally to engage,—

1. Formally to acknowledge the independence of the Islands of Huahine, Raiatea, and Borabora (to the leeward of Tahiti), and of the small islands adjacent to and dependent upon those islands;

2. Never to take possession of the said islands, nor of any one or more of them, either absolutely or under the title of a protectorate, or in any other form whatever;

3. Never to acknowledge that a chief or prince reigning in Tahiti can at the same time reign in any one or more of the other islands above mentioned; nor, on the other hand, that a chief or prince reigning in any one or more of those other islands can reign at the same time in Tahiti; the reciprocal independence of the islands above mentioned, and of the Island of Tahiti and its dependencies, being established as a principle.

The undersigned, Her Britannic Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and the Minister Plenipotentiary of His Majesty the King of the French at the Court of London, being