

-hampered. It is true that the French vessels of the above list are small vessels, but, owing to the proximity of Noumea, only small vessels are required. Meantime let our friends in Australia take note of the significant fact that the French company, which drew in its anti-English horns on the withdrawal (in March, 1888) of its marine associates, is now beginning again most arrogantly to push them forth in this place.

In a former letter I mentioned the visit of the French packet-boat "Tanais," with the Mayor of Noumea and others on board, and of the consequent proposed French municipality at Fila. It now appears that the formation of the Australasian New Hebrides Company had become known, and that this was in part a counter movement. It is this company that is referred to in the first paragraph of the following letter, which I give translated, from the new "Mayor" of Fila and "his colleagues in Noumea," who had by that time returned home in the "Tanais" to that place:—

"MESSIEURS,—The situation in the New Hebrides is accentuated. The Australian colonists, not content with a Press war against the French Hebridean enterprise, are throwing themselves into the lists with all the confidence given by an unlimited credit; from all sides rise up powerful companies specially created to dispute with us the preponderance in these islands. We have only, Messieurs, our union and our energy to resist this invasion.

"The creation of French municipalities in the New Hebrides is the most efficacious method of preserving intact the situation we have conquered with so much difficulty; for the rest, history shows us that it is above all in municipal institutions that the vitality of a race centres. The foreign sabre has often been blunted against these institutions. Small Holland, strong by its municipal organizations, is always mighty. . . . The aristocracy of Poland lives only in memoirs!

"We have, Messieurs, a great moral interest in showing to our adversaries that we are able—we also—to organize one of those self-governments of which they are so proud. For too long it has been agreed, even among our compatriots, that we are incapable of colonising. We will prove what a few French colonists can do by union of wills and concentration of efforts, concurring towards a common end, and if, in the future, success, prosperity crown our enterprise, the mother-country shall be happy and proud to count us among the number of her children.

"Messieurs, the Hebrides colonists are poor . . . and not able to ask pecuniary assistance from our Government, since international conventions condemn it to neutrality, but we can solicit our fellow-countrymen for aid by a public subscription towards the construction of a modest Town Hall, which shall serve for a rallying point to the French established in the New Hebrides; and I address myself to you, Messieurs, with a confidence wholly filial. . . . We are not the first colonial expansion of New Caledonia.

"I have the honour to be, M. the Mayor, MM. the municipal Councillors, your most humble and obedient servant,

"The Mayor of Franceville

"F. CHEVILLARD."

On receipt of this effusion the Noumean Town Council, as might have been expected, met and agreed to send their congratulations to the new Mayor of Fila, and to start a public subscription in New Caledonia as requested, and unanimously, without discussion, agreed to head the list with a sum of 1,000fr. (£40) from the Town Council of Noumea.

One curious fact brought out is that Mr. Macleod and M. Chevillard have jointly given a piece of their land (where the boundaries meet) for the erection of this proposed French Town Hall. The oldest settler in Fila, not a Frenchman, but a German, says he has no objection to the Town Hall, but draws the line at municipal taxation, to which he will not agree.

Sub-enclosure No. 3.

DEAR SIR,—

Cotham Road, Kew, Friday, 8th June, 1883.

I am sorry I could not sooner send you the required dates of memorials and petitions to the Queen for a protectorate, and for annexation of the New Hebrides Islands. I feel also sorry the following are so imperfect, as all such records are kept by Dr. Steel, the agent of our mission in Sydney, and now he is in Melbourne attending a Conference, but they can be got from him on his return; but at present I forward all I have been able to get from blue-books, though very imperfect, as a number are not noted in books now within my reach.

In A.D. 1862 the chiefs of Tanna sent a petition through me to Sir John Young, Governor of New South Wales, for a protectorate. He did not forward it. In A.D. 1868 a petition was presented to the Earl of Belmore by the New Hebrides Mission for Her Majesty the Queen. In A.D. 1868 a petition was presented to Lord Stanley by the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland, for Her Majesty the Queen. In A.D. 1872 a petition was presented to Earl Kimberley, Secretary of State for the Colonies, by the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland, for the Queen. In A.D. 1874 a petition was sent to the Queen regarding the labour traffic, and implying a British protectorate, like all the above noted. In November, 1874, another petition was sent from Victoria regarding the "slave or labour traffic," and a protectorate. In A.D. 1874 or 1875 a petition was sent by the natives of Efate, per Lieutenant Carey, of H.M. gunboat "Conflict," which was presented, for annexation like Fiji, as they expressed it, through Mr. Macdonald. In A.D. 1877 the Presbyterian Church of Victoria, the Presbyterian Church of New South Wales, and the Free Church of Scotland, and the Mission, all sent petitions to the Queen for annexation of the New Hebrides to Great Britain. In A.D. 1882 a petition was sent from a Conference which met in Sydney, representing all the Presbyterians of Australasia, and others followed from Victoria, and South Australia, and Tasmania, and the New Hebrides Mission, and the natives, and the Free Church of Scotland, to the Queen, entreating the annexation of the group to Great Britain.

The above will show you that the subject has been long before the minds of the natives, the missionaries, and Europeans on the islands, and all the churches at Home and in our Australasian Colonies, which have been engaged in the work of civilising and christianizing the New Hebrides Islands.