

were before them two questions, viz.: Mr. Annand's return, and the appointment of a fourth missionary. The first of these questions I have already spoken of. It was agreed that he should return.

The second question, the appointment of another, was more difficult. It consisted of two parts. (1.) Does the political position warrant the increase of our staff there? (2.) If so, has there been any offer of service that the committee can accept?

With regard to the political position it was now known that the French had settled soldiers on two of the islands, and were maintaining military stations there, and that all things seemed to point to their remaining. So far as our knowledge was concerned the prospect had become much darker since the previous meeting. The second part of the question was, are there any offers which the Board can accept, if prospects grow brighter. But one offer had been received. That one was considered, and the committee felt that they had not sufficient knowledge to justify them in appointing, even if the way were clear, and directed further enquiry.

On Dec. 23rd, the Committee again met. The political outlook had grown still darker. Eight members were present besides the chairman. Two motions were made. They are given on another page of this paper. One was, to take steps toward an immediate appointment; the other, that in view of all the circumstances, some of which were not before us at previous meetings, we cannot accept the responsibility of appointing a fourth missionary. Four voted for the motion, four for the amendment. The chairman declined to vote. Nothing was done. Such is the history of the action of the F. M. Committee with regard to the appointment of a fourth missionary.

WHY SHOULD MR. ANNAND RETURN?

The question has been asked, "If French occupation is sufficient to prevent the appointment of another missionary, should it not also prevent Mr. Annand's return?" The two cases are by no means parallel. French occupation is but one element in the question. Apart from that there are reasons why Mr. Annand should return and reasons why another should not be appointed. Let the readers weigh them and form their own conclusions.

SOME REASONS FOR HIS RETURNING.

(1.) From long acquaintance with the islands, and the people, and the languages, and the work, in the New Hebrides, he is eminently fitted for that field, and it would be a loss of valuable experience, dearly purchased, were he to labor in any other.

(2.) It would be discouraging to the other churches engaged in the group, and above all, to our other two missionaries there, especially in this time of anxiety, if their hands were weakened by the removal of one of their most experienced men.

(3.) While French annexation might make it unwise to send more men, and extend our operations in the New Hebrides, the men that have been at work in the mission should not be withdrawn until circumstances compel such a step.

SOME QUESTIONS TO BE CONSIDERED WITH REGARD TO SENDING A FOURTH MISSIONARY.

I will now state some of the matters that have to be considered in connection with appointing a fourth missionary.

(1.) One fact that meets us is the state of the Funds. In the Eastern Section, although missionaries have been visiting the churches and stirring them up, and circulars and appeals have been sent out, and every effort made by the committee to get money for the Foreign Work now on hand, there has been for the last four years, an average deficit of over \$C00 per year, the debt upon the Fund steadily increasing, until at the close of the last financial year it was over \$2000. For the last two years, in the Western Section, there has been an average deficit of nearly \$10,000 per year, reducing a balance, which they had on hand in 1884, in consequence of two large legacies, to about \$3000 at the close of accounts in May, 1886.

(2.) There is another fact or rather series of facts, with regard to the New Hebrides that must be considered, even if the Funds should warrant the appointment. These facts are the following:

(1.) The field is not large. Provision is now made for occupying two of the three largest islands, viz.: Malekula and Ambrym, leaving only Santo of the large islands. True there are smaller ones that have no missionaries, but most of the more important places will soon have the gospel. The work of carrying the gospel to the