

and altogether unsuccessful efforts¹ had been made to colonize New Zealand, owing partly to the indifference of the English government, partly to the opposition of the missionaries, and partly to the terrible, devastating wars which were sweeping over the north island. But in 1837, Captain Hobson, in a report to Governor Bourke of New South Wales, recommended the making of certain commercial treaties with the native chiefs. The same year a New Zealand Association was formed in London by several influential political and commercial gentlemen, for the purpose of colonizing the islands,² but as they were only able to obtain from the government a qualified assent to their proposals, the attempt to secure a charter in the House of Commons failed. Events in New Zealand proved their best ally. The prospect of British annexation had induced numerous land-sharpers to enter into fictitious agreements with the native chiefs for the alienation of a large part of their domain. These unscrupulous claims naturally provoked great bitterness among the deluded natives, and a period of anarchy seemed threatening. The missionaries, anxious to preserve the interests of their people from spoliation, were driven to favor a policy of annexation as the only peaceful solution of the difficulty. Meanwhile the eyes of the French government had been turned in the direction of this valuable group and the designs of the latter served as a spur to the Colonial Office, which at last awakening to the danger of procrastination determined upon the annexation of the islands.

About the middle of 1839 Governor Gipps was officially informed of the intention of the English government,³ that "certain parts of the island of New Zealand should be added to the colony of New South Wales as a dependency of that government and that Captain Hobson should proceed thither as British consul to fill the office of Lieutenant-Governor,"—a policy possibly modelled after the precedent of the settlement in Van Dieman's Land. Under his instructions, Hobson was authorized to establish a form of civil government with the consent of the natives, and commanded to restrain as far as possible the alienation of native lands except where confirmed by royal grant. In these two conditions we see an earnest attempt of the British

¹Coghlan, *The Seven Colonies of Aust.*, p. 192.

²Egerton, *Br. Colonial Policy*, p. 290. Rusden, *Hist. of New Zealand*, ch. V.

³Quick and Garran, *Annot. Const. of Aust.*, p. 75.