

No. 5.

Copy of a Letter from the Hon. E. W. STAFFORD to the Hon. J. McCULLOCH.

SIR,— New Zealand, Colonial Secretary's Office, Wellington, 17th December, 1866.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 26th ultimo, and in reply, to state that this Government accedes to the proposal contained therein, that a Conference of Delegates from the several Australasian Colonies should take place at Melbourne, for the full discussion of all matters connected with Steam Postal Communication, with a view to their settlement on equitable grounds.

Mr. Crosbie Ward, a Member of the New Zealand Legislature, at present in Australia, has accordingly been accredited to represent this Government in the Conference.

The Hon. the Chief Secretary, Melbourne.

I have, &c.,
E. W. STAFFORD.

No. 6.

Copy of a Letter from the Hon. H. PARKES to the Hon. E. W. STAFFORD.

Colonial Secretary's Office, Sydney, New South Wales,
11th December, 1866.

SIR,—

Referring to your letter of November 5th, enclosing communication from the Chief Secretary of Victoria on the subject of Postal Communication, I have now the honor to transmit for your information a copy of a letter addressed to the Victorian Government in reply to a proposal for a Conference of Representatives from the several Colonies, to consider the whole question with a view to a satisfactory settlement.

2. If the Government of New Zealand should decide to send Representatives to such Conference, I should be glad to be informed of such decision at your earliest convenience.

The Honorable the Colonial Secretary of
New Zealand, Wellington.

I have, &c.,
HENRY PARKES.

Enclosure in No. 6.

SIR,—

Colonial Secretary's Office, Sydney, 10th December, 1866.

Acknowledging the receipt of your letters of October 10th and November 26th, on the subject of Steam Postal Communication between these Colonies and England, I am now desired by His Excellency Sir John Young to inform you of the views of this Government on the questions submitted by you.

2. In your letter of October 10th, you say that the Government of Victoria, having attentively considered the subject, is most desirous that the through service by way of Suez and Panama should be placed on a permanent and equitable footing; although you express your opinion, that as a direct postal route for the whole of the Australian Colonies, the line connecting with the Peninsular and Oriental Company's Steamers at Point de Galle, will always present superior advantages. Holding this view, you inform the Government of New South Wales that, while desirous of dealing with the question in a spirit of concession, you would not feel justified in recommending that Victoria should contribute towards the maintenance of the Panama Service, on the same principle that regulates the payments made in liquidation of the Colonial moiety of the subsidy to the Peninsular and Oriental Company. In the event of this Colony continuing to be a party to the maintenance of the service *via* Galle, you express your willingness, however, to consider in a fair and impartial manner any proposal for the payment by Victoria of a fixed annual sum for the privilege of forwarding and receiving mails *via* Panama.

3. In your letter of November 26th, you bring under the notice of this Government the recent Minute of the Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury; more especially that portion of the Minute which expresses a strong desire that the Colonies themselves, in combination, should undertake to provide for the Postal Service between Australia and Galle for the future, and you urge that this intelligence affords another reason, in addition to those advanced in a former correspondence, in favour of a meeting of Delegates from the several Colonies for the full discussion of all matters connected with Ocean Postal Communication. You suggest that a Postal Conference such as you recommend should be held without further delay, and that the Representatives appointed by the several Colonies should be invested with full powers; as it is of the highest importance that the whole question, as affected by Inter-colonial interests, and by the purport of Lord Carnarvon's Despatch, should be settled on equitable grounds for the common good.

4. On the importance of maintaining the through service, now that it has been successfully established, and the expediency of settling the whole question of Ocean Mail Communication in equitable regard to the interests of all the Colonies, and on a basis that shall afford some prospect of satisfaction and permanence, this Government cordially concurs in your views as now communicated, and it reciprocates the desire you express for the formation of friendly relations in all matters of Inter-colonial interest. No special objection is seen to the mode of arriving at a settlement proposed by you, and as the Government of New Zealand is also anxious for a conference of the Colonies on the subject, this Colony will be prepared to accredit Representatives to any such Conference in the month of February next, to be held either in Melbourne or Sydney, as a majority of the Colonies becoming parties to it shall determine.

5. In approaching the discussions of the special points on which opinions are likely to differ, in arriving at any general agreement for the establishment of a complete and satisfactory Ocean Steam Postal Service, the extent to which this Government is committed to the maintenance of communication *via* Panama, must necessarily influence its deliberations, and still more so, it is presumed, the deliberations of the New Zealand Government. On the other hand, the Government of Queensland