

PAPERS

RELATIVE TO

A PROPOSED CONFERENCE

BETWEEN

THE GOVERNMENTS OF NEW ZEALAND AND
AUSTRALIA.

PRESENTED TO BOTH HOUSES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, BY COMMAND OF
HIS EXCELLENCY.

WELLINGTON.

—
1869.

PAPERS RELATIVE TO A PROPOSED CONFERENCE BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENTS
OF NEW ZEALAND AND AUSTRALIA.

No. 1.

The Hon. E. W. STAFFORD to the CHIEF SECRETARY, Victoria.

(Circular 169.)

Colonial Secretary's Office,

Wellington, 29th October, 1868.

SIR,—

I have the honor to enclose a copy of a Resolution adopted by the House of Representatives in this Colony, recommending that steps should be taken to ascertain the position of the Colony in relation to commercial treaties between Great Britain and Foreign Powers, and, especially, that authority should be sought to enable New Zealand, in conjunction with the Australasian Colonies, to enter into negotiations with the United States for the free admission into that country of wool, the product of those Colonies.

In order to enable you better to understand the general object of the resolution, I enclose a report of the debate thereon (pages 197 to 201, *New Zealand Hansard*, week ending 10th October, 1868).

In connection with this subject I may mention, that the question of the free interchange between the Australian Colonies and New Zealand of certain of their products has been under the consideration of this Government, and has incidentally been referred to in Parliament. Fully impressed with the importance of some legislation on this subject, the Government would have submitted to the Legislature a measure for the encouragement of that interchange under certain conditions, were it not for the legal difficulty in framing such a measure so as to avoid the possible infringement of commercial treaties between the Government of the United Kingdom and Foreign Governments—a difficulty which has already caused the disallowance by Her Majesty of the Tasmanian Act (No. 23, 1867), entitled “A Bill to promote Intercolonial Free Trade.”

It is unnecessary for me to dilate on the importance of this subject, or on the common interest which a maritime group like the Australasian Colonies must have in a satisfactory settlement of their commercial relations with the United States and other foreign countries, and also with each other. This community of interest demands community of action, and, with that view, the Government of New Zealand is anxious to join with the Governments of the other Colonies in devising and adopting some united course of proceeding which, by the aid of Imperial legislation or otherwise, would enable the obstacles which have hitherto existed to be overcome, and would permanently secure the common object in view.

A conference of delegates from the Colonies concerned would no doubt be the best means of dealing with the consideration of these subjects, and of arriving at some practical conclusion. This conference might also deal with other questions, respecting which correspondence is now passing between some of the Australian Governments and this Government—namely, the Ocean Postal Service, the establishment of a Depot at the Auckland Islands, and the erection of a Lighthouse on “The Snares,” a dangerous reef to the south of New Zealand, in the course of vessels bound from Australia towards Cape Horn. Any other matters which may require joint consideration could also receive attention.

I would accordingly suggest that for this purpose a conference of delegates from each Colony be held at Sydney about (say) the 1st of February next, and I earnestly hope that this proposal may be in conformity with the views of your Government.

I shall feel obliged by a reply at your early convenience; and it would obviate delay if you would be good enough to intimate its purport to the other Australasian Governments, to whom I have made a similar communication.

I have, &c.,

E. W. STAFFORD.

The Hon. the Chief Secretary, Victoria.

[Similar letter to other Australian Governments except Western Australia.]

Enclosure in No. 1.

EXTRACT from the JOURNALS of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, Wednesday, the 7th day of
October, 1868.

(No. 68-68.)

RESOLVED, “That, in the opinion of this House, it is desirable steps should be taken to ascertain the position which the Colony holds in relation to Commercial Treaties made by Great Britain with Foreign countries, and especially that authority should be sought to enable New Zealand, in conjunction with other Australasian Colonies, to enter into negotiations with the United States for the free admission to that country of wool, the product of those Colonies.”—*On motion of Mr. Vogel.*

No. 2.

The Hon. E. W. STAFFORD to the CHIEF SECRETARY, Victoria.

(Circular 170.)

Colonial Secretary's Office,

Wellington, 29th October, 1868.

SIR,—

I have the honor to enclose for the consideration of the Government of Victoria a copy of a Report, dated the 2nd instant, from Mr. James Balfour, the Colonial Marine Engineer, on the proposal

of erecting a Lighthouse on the Snares, at the entrance of Foveaux Straits, as a guide to the numerous vessels sailing from Australia to South America and to Europe *via* Cape Horn. The establishment of a lighthouse in that locality would, besides indicating the position of the Snares, thereby preventing damage to vessels passing near to them, constitute a fixed point of departure for vessels bound on these voyages, and diminish the risk of shipwrecks on the Auckland Islands, the occurrence of which has been of late so frequent.

As this is a subject in which all the Australasian Colonies are jointly interested, it would most fitly be dealt with at a conference of delegates; and I have accordingly, in my letter No. 169, of even date herewith, suggested it as one of the questions to be submitted to the conference proposed therein.

The Hon. Chief Secretary, Victoria.

I have, &c.,

E. W. STAFFORD.

[Similar letter to other Australian Governments, except Western Australia.]

Enclosure in No. 2.

REPORT by Mr. BALFOUR.

SIR,—

Marine Department, Wellington, 2nd October, 1868.

With reference to a proposal to erect a Lighthouse on the Snares, I have the honor to report as follows:—

1. I was examined by the Select Committee of the Honorable Legislative Council with reference to the propriety of erecting a light on the Auckland Islands or elsewhere, with a view to the prevention of the recurrence of such terrible disasters as the wreck of the "General Grant."

2. I then expressed the opinion that a lighthouse on the Snares would be of more general service than any single lighthouse on the Auckland Islands, and, should it be found moderately easy to effect a landing on any of the group (the Snares), that it would not probably be more costly.

3. I was influenced in forming this opinion by the consideration of the great length of the Auckland group (over thirty nautic miles) which would render it difficult to cover them effectually by one light, whereas the most outlying of the Snares is not more than three and a half nautic miles from the centre of the principal island; thus, a good light on the main island would very efficiently cover the whole danger.

4. Another argument in favour of the Snares is, that a light there would be of great service to the shipping bound for any of the southern portions of this Colony from ports eastward of Australia, as such vessels usually go to the southward of Stewart Island, and very generally make the Snares as their land-fall. A light on the Auckland Islands, on the other hand, would be of very little service to the trade of this Colony.

5. A light on the Snares would be of great service to the homeward-bound fleet from Sydney (right on their track), Brisbane, Melbourne (for a considerable part of the year at least, though it would be somewhat to the north of the most usual track), and probably to a less extent of South Australia and Tasmania.

6. A light or lights on the Auckland Islands would be more generally useful to homeward-bound vessels from Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania, but it would be of little or no use to the shipping trade of Queensland, New South Wales, or New Zealand.

7. But little is known of the Snares. The "New Zealand Pilot" (p. 228) says—"The Snares are a bold and moderately high group of islands, *destitute of vegetation* and covered by myriads of the pintado or Cape pigeon. They lie sixty-two miles S.S.W. of the S.W. end of Stewart Island, and extend four and a half miles in a N.E. by E. and S.W. by W. direction. *They are an excellent landmark from the westward, and are recommended to be made as a point of departure in passing south of Stewart Island*, whereas the name they bear would deter vessels from approaching them."

"The N.E. or largest island is little more than one mile in length by half a mile in breadth, rising on the south side perpendicularly to the height of 470 feet; the N.E. side is less precipitous, and probably accessible under very favourable circumstances. The western portion of the group consists of four islets, separated from the large island by a channel of two miles in width."

8. This account must be modified by more recent statements. In the official report of the crew of the brig "Amherst" (*Southland Gazette*, No. 9 of vol. 6, published Saturday, 11th April, 1868), the following passage occurs:—"At noon on the 28th, when as yet the brig was eight miles distant from the Snares, the wind headed us, so a boat was lowered, into which I stepped, and we pulled away for the N.E. side of the island, where is a small gulch or cove, the only boat harbour on it, I believe. Thousands of mutton-birds, nellies, penguins, &c., heralded our approach, and to some extent prepared us for what we saw on landing. Once on shore our party was divided, and we commenced our search. I and two others made for the west side, where we climbed a high bluff, some 500 feet high, commanding a good view of the whole island. Our progress was painfully slow, the entire surface being literally honeycombed with mutton-bird holes, into which the foot sank deeply at every step—the inmates thereof betokening their dissatisfaction at our presence by giving vent to a half-choked, querulous cry. The penguins (ludicrous birds) in hundreds, drawn up in rank and file, stood to oppose our march, and it required not a little vigorous kicking to force our way through them. We fired the grass on the open, and made a considerable smoke; but during our stay of four hours, we had no evidence whatever to show that any one was or had been living on the island. . . . Taking a last look round, we recognized the necessity for our immediate departure, the mutton-birds darkening the sky in their flight, banging down on the ground in thousands in a most absurd and reckless manner, inflicting severe buffets on the heads of several of us."

"The Snares are in latitude 48° 3' S., longitude 166° 45' E., and, under this name, comprise two islands, a large reef to the N.W. of the main (three and a half miles distant), and several outlying rocks. The small island (half a mile long) is separated from the main on its east side by a very narrow passage. The larger island I take to be about four miles in circumference; greatest elevation,

600 feet; coast line very bold. It is almost entirely covered with scrub and trees of stunted growth—the Tupari, Ake-ake, and Kokomuka. Of McQuarrie cabbage there is abundance and of fine growth, some of the leaves measuring two feet in diameter. Patches clear of scrub are clothed with the tutaki tussock. The soil is peaty and well mingled with guano, and very moist. What rocks I saw were of the felspathic group. We found no water at all palatable—some I drank being quite brackish—but then the birds would render the best undrinkable.”

9. Thus it appears that, instead of being “destitute of vegetation,” these islands, or rather the main island, is “almost entirely covered with scrub and trees of stunted growth;” there is also a landing-place, but it remains to be seen how often it would be possible to effect a landing, and whether bulky articles could be landed in safety. The only objection that I can at present see to the erection of a small and comparatively inexpensive lighthouse on the summit of the main island is its height (500 to 600 feet), as a light at such an elevation would, I fear, be liable to be frequently obscured by fogs; it may be possible, on visiting the island, to select a site at an elevation not exceeding 200 feet which will permit the light to be visible in all necessary directions. An elevation of 200 feet would give a range of visibility of about twenty-two nautic miles in clear weather, which is ample for all practical purposes; and it would make the light much less liable to be obscured by fogs, a matter of the utmost importance.

10. From the foregoing extracts it will be obvious that it is quite possible to erect a lighthouse on the Snares; the cost will depend almost entirely on the landing facilities. It should be a light of the most powerful description procurable, and I should estimate the cost of the lantern and apparatus in England at from £4,000 to £5,000, with a view to procuring a very powerful flash. A revolving white light attaining its greatest brilliance every minute would probably be the most suitable arrangement. The cost of the buildings can only be guessed in the mean time; but, unless the difficulties are more formidable than I anticipate, I consider that a sum not exceeding £15,000 in all would suffice for every thing, *i.e.* apparatus £5,000, building £10,000.

The cost of maintenance would be considerable. Considering the inaccessibility of the site, it would be proper to have at least four keepers; and these should either be better paid than at other lighthouses or should receive rations in addition to their pay. The annual cost of maintaining the station should not be estimated lower than £1,200 to £1,500. In addition to this, however, it would be necessary to charter a vessel to visit the station at least four times a year; and on one if not two of her trips she ought to go on to the Auckland Islands, to renew the depôt of provisions, and examine the islands for possible castaways; this service would probably cost not less than £500. Consequently the annual cost of maintaining such a light should not be estimated under about £2,000 sterling.

11. Thus, in considering the propriety of erecting a lighthouse on the Snares, it would be proper to contemplate an original expenditure of not less than £15,000, and an annual outlay little if at all under £2,000.

12. Should the Government decide to take further steps in the matter, I should propose to visit the Snares in the “St. Kilda” in the course of the coming summer; after which I should be able to make a more minute report, and to furnish more detailed estimates of the probable cost of the work.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Postmaster-General,
Wellington.

JAMES M. BALFOUR,
Colonial Marine Engineer.

No. 3.

The Hon. SIR RICHARD DRY to the Hon. E. W. STAFFORD.

(B. 1408.)

SIR,—

Tasmania,
Colonial Secretary's Office, 24th November, 1868.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt, on the 18th instant, of your letter of the 29th ultimo, enclosing a copy of a Resolution adopted by the New Zealand House of Representatives, “recommending that steps should be taken to ascertain the position of the Colony in relation to Commercial Treaties between Great Britain and Foreign Powers, and especially that authority should be sought to enable New Zealand, in conjunction with the Australasian Colonies, to enter into negotiations with the United States for the free admission into that country of wool, the product of those Colonies;” and suggesting that a conference of delegates from the various Colonies should be held in Sydney about the 1st of February next, for the purpose of considering this, and the important questions of the free interchange of products between the Colonies, the Ocean Postal Service, the establishment of a Depôt at the Auckland Islands, and the erection of a Lighthouse on the Snares.

In reply, I have to inform you that this Government fully recognises the gravity of the questions raised by you, and will willingly join in the proposed conference. I may, however, point out that at the season in which it is proposed that the conference should be held, it is not improbable that the heat in Sydney will be so great as to cause inconvenience to the delegates, and perhaps to hinder their deliberations. I would therefore suggest that the meeting should take place in Hobart Town, which is conveniently situated, and where the temperature is moderate.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary,
New Zealand.

RICHARD DRY.

No. 4.

The Hon. J. ROBERTSON to the Hon. E. W. STAFFORD.

(No. 190.)

SIR,—

Colonial Secretary's Office,
Sydney, New South Wales, 4th December, 1868.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 29th October last, in explanation of the general object of a Resolution, a copy of which you forwarded, adopted by your House

of Representatives, affecting the commercial interests of the Australian Colonies, and to say in reply, that this Government fully concurs in the opinion expressed, that it would be of the greatest advantage to this Colony to ascertain its commercial *status* in relation to the treaties made by Great Britain with Foreign Powers, and to obtain authority to negotiate for the free admission into America or other countries of the products of New South Wales.

This Government is fully alive to the advisability of some legislation being initiated, as suggested by you, for establishing a free interchange of products between the Australian Colonies and New Zealand respectively. Acknowledging, therefore, the great importance of the step recommended by your Legislature, as well as the necessity for immediate and united action being taken to overcome the obstacles which stand in the way of permanently securing an object so desirable, I shall invite the Governments of the other Australian Colonies to express their opinion upon the advisability of adopting the suggestion for a conference of delegates to consider—

1. The introduction of free trade in intercolonial products; and also,
2. A uniform Tariff; and
3. A Union of Customs.

To be held in this city in the early part of the month of March next, as that would be more convenient, it appears, than the date suggested by you.

The opportunity might be properly taken, of submitting to such conference any questions of a cognate nature, of which a practical solution may be desired for the mutual benefit of the group of Australasian Colonies and New Zealand.

A copy of this letter will be forwarded to the Governments of Victoria, South Australia, Queensland and Tasmania.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, New Zealand.

I have, &c.,

JOHN ROBERTSON.

No. 5.

The Hon. J. ROBERTSON to the Hon. E. W. STAFFORD.

(No. 189.)

SIR,—

Colonial Secretary's Office,

Sydney, New South Wales, 4th December, 1868.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 29th of October last, enclosing, for the information of this Government, a copy of a Report dated the 2nd of the same month from Mr. James Balfour, the Colonial Marine Engineer, on the proposal of erecting a Lighthouse on the Snares, at the entrance of Foveaux Straits, as a guide to the numerous vessels sailing from Australia to South America and Europe *via* Cape Horn; and, in reference to my letter of this date, to say that I concur in the view which you have expressed of the question—as one in which all the Australasian Colonies are jointly interested—being most fitly submitted to the proposed conference.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, New Zealand.

JOHN ROBERTSON.

No. 6.

The Hon. J. McCULLOCH to the Hon. E. W. STAFFORD.

(No. 3,286.)

SIR,—

Chief Secretary's Office,

Melbourne, Victoria, 12th December, 1868.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 29th October last, suggesting that a conference be held at Sydney about the 1st of February, next year, for the purpose of considering—

- 1st, The commercial relations of the Australasian Colonies with the United States and other foreign countries, and also with each other.
- 2nd, The Ocean Postal Service.
- 3rd, The establishment of a Depôt at the Auckland Islands, and the erection of a Lighthouse on the Snares.

The Government of Victoria is fully alive to the importance of the questions proposed to be dealt with, and is especially anxious that the most advantageous relations may be established between all the Australasian Colonies in reference to Customs duties, facilities for the Intercolonial trade, Postal service, and Ocean lights.

The full discussion of these subjects by duly accredited representatives of the Colonies interested, can scarcely fail to be attended with the greatest advantage, and this Government will gladly take part in a conference for that purpose; but I regret that the state of public business, and the probability of Parliament being in Session, make it impossible for them to be represented at Sydney in February next. It is therefore suggested that, if convenient to the other Governments concerned, the conference be held in Melbourne at the date proposed, or, if that be not practicable, that a later period of the year be named for the meeting at Sydney.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, New Zealand.

JAMES McCULLOCH.

No. 7.

The Hon. T. B. STEPHENS to the Hon. E. W. STAFFORD.

SIR,—

Colonial Secretary's Office,

Brisbane, Queensland, 24th December, 1868.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your circular letter of the 29th of October last, wherein, adverting to the general object of a Résolution (a copy of which you enclose) adopted by the House of Representatives in New Zealand during its last Session, on a subject affecting to

a considerable extent the commercial interest of the whole of the Australian Colonies, you suggest a conference of delegates, which you propose should be held at Sydney in the early part of February next, for the purpose of ascertaining the position of New Zealand, in conjunction with the several Australian Colonies, with regard to the commercial treaties made by Great Britain with Foreign Powers, and at the same time considering other matters of a kindred nature.

In reply, I have the honor to inform you that this Government concurs in the action contemplated, and impressed with the benefits which may be expected to accrue to the whole of the Colonies from the labours of delegates appointed to inquire into the important subjects to which your circular has reference, accordingly, upon the re-assembling of Parliament (at the end of this month), the necessary steps will be taken to procure authority for the appointment of a delegate or delegates to represent Queensland at the proposed conference.

In dealing with this question, the Government have had before them the replies sent to you from the Colonies of Tasmania and New South Wales; and without further adverting to the opinions expressed therein than indorsing the suggestion made by Mr. Robertson, that the meeting should take place in the early part of March, instead of February, as recommended by you, I would observe that this Government is of opinion that the following matters ought to form the principal subjects of deliberation:—

- 1st, To ascertain the exact position and powers of the several Australian Colonies in relation to existing Commercial Treaties between Great Britain and Foreign Countries.
- 2nd, To confer and advise upon the best means of obtaining for these Colonies freedom of action, so as to enable them, should they desire, to negotiate—
 - (a.) The admission into other countries, duty free, or upon such terms as may be agreed upon, the products of Australia and New Zealand; and
 - (b.) The free interchange of products between New Zealand and the Australian Colonies respectively.
- 3rd, To deliberate and report upon the expediency or otherwise of establishing a uniform Tariff for the Colonies.

It may also be advisable to consider any other other matters of a cognate nature, such as Immigration, the Ocean Steam Postal Service, Telegraph Extension, erection and maintenance of Lighthouses, Legal Comity, and the establishment of an Australian Court of Appeal.

In expressing a hope that uniformity of action may be observed by the Governments of the several Colonies in bringing the conference to a successful issue, I beg to acquaint you that a copy of this letter will be sent to the Governments of New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania, and South Australia.

I have, &c.,

T. B. STEPHENS.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, New Zealand.

No. 8.

The Hon. J. ROBERTSON to the Hon. E. W. STAFFORD.

(No. 4.)

Colonial Secretary's Office,

SIR,—

Sydney, New South Wales, 11th January, 1869.

In reference to the correspondence which has taken place with a view to the meeting in this city, in the month of March next, of delegates from the Australian Colonies and New Zealand, to consider the subjects of free trade, a uniform tariff and other cognate important subjects, I have now the honor to suggest that telegraphic communication with the Continent of Europe and Great Britain *via* India may form one of the important questions to which the conference may be prepared to devote its most earnest consideration.

I have, &c.,

JOHN ROBERTSON.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, New Zealand.

No. 9.

The Hon. J. V. BAGOT to the Hon. E. W. STAFFORD.

(No. 30-69.)

Chief Secretary's Office,

SIR,—

Adelaide, South Australia, 12th January, 1869.

I have the honor, by the desire of His Excellency Lieut.-Colonel Hamley, to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 29th October last, enclosing copy of a Resolution adopted by the New Zealand House of Representatives, "recommending that steps should be taken to ascertain the position of the Colony in relation to Commercial Treaties between Great Britain and Foreign Powers, and, especially, that authority should be sought to enable New Zealand, in conjunction with the Australian Colonies, to enter into negotiations with the United States for the free admission into that country of wool," and suggesting that a conference of delegates from the several Colonies should be held in Sydney about the 1st of February next, for the purpose of considering this, and the important question of the free interchange of products between the Colonies, the Ocean Postal Service, the establishment of a Depôt at the Auckland Islands, and the erection of a Lighthouse on the Snares.

In reply, I am to inform you that this Government fully realize the importance of the questions raised by you, and will cheerfully join in the proposed conference. They would suggest the same should be held at some place connected with Adelaide by telegraph.

I have, &c.,

JOHN V. BAGOT.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, New Zealand.

No. 10.

The Hon. J. V. BAGOT to the Hon. E. W. STAFFORD.

(No. 32-69.)
SIR,—

Chief Secretary's Office,

Adelaide, South Australia, 12th January, 1869.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of 29th October last, on the subject of the proposed erection of a Lighthouse on the Snares, at the entrance of Foveaux Straits.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, New Zealand.

JOHN V. BAGOT.

No. 11.

The Hon. E. W. STAFFORD to the CHIEF SECRETARY, Victoria.

(No. 36.)
SIR,—

Colonial Secretary's Office,

Wellington, 19th March, 1869.

Adverting to the correspondence which has taken place on the subject of a conference of delegates from the various Australasian Colonies, I would be much obliged if you would inform me whether any agreement has been arrived at with respect to the time and place at which the conference is to be held. As part of the original proposal of this Government, it was suggested that the conference should be held at Sydney in February last. The replies received from the respective Governments, while agreeing on the desirability of a conference, differed considerably, however, as to the time and place of meeting. Either Sydney or Melbourne as the place of meeting will be equally convenient to this Government; and I would now propose, in order to save further delay, that you should agree with the Government of New South Wales as to the place at which the delegates should assemble, and so soon as that has been agreed on, intimate the same to this Government and to the Governments of South Australia, Tasmania, and Queensland, all of which have expressed a desire to be represented.

I trust that the time of meeting may not be later than the middle of April at furthest, and, if possible, that an earlier date may be named, as after that date the delegates who it is proposed should represent the Government of New Zealand would be prevented from attending, owing to the New Zealand Parliament being in Session, where their presence would be required.

I have informed the Government of New South Wales to the effect of this letter.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Chief Secretary, Victoria.

E. W. STAFFORD.

[Letter of similar tenor and date to Colonial Secretary, New South Wales.]

No. 12.

The Hon. J. ROBERTSON to the Hon. E. W. STAFFORD.

SIR,—

Colonial Secretary's Office,

Sydney, New South Wales, 3rd April, 1869.

With reference to your letter of the 29th October last, and subsequent correspondence relative to the conference of delegates from the various Australasian Colonies, proposed to be held for the purpose of discussing the introduction of free trade in intercolonial products, and other questions, I have the honor to remind you, that no reply has as yet been received from you to my communication of the 4th December last, wherein the early part of last month was named as the date of the projected congress, and to suggest that the same should take place at Sydney during the second week in June next.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, New Zealand.

JOHN ROBERTSON.

No. 13.

The Hon. J. ROBERTSON to the Hon. E. W. STAFFORD.

SIR,—

Colonial Secretary's Office,

Sydney, New South Wales, 13th April, 1869.

In reply to your letter of the 19th ultimo, inquiring whether any agreement had been arrived at with respect to the time and place of holding the proposed conference of delegates from the various Australasian Colonies, I have the honor to refer you to my communication of the 3rd instant, in which it was suggested that the conference should take place in Sydney during the second week in June next.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, New Zealand.

JOHN ROBERTSON.

No. 14.

The Hon. J. McCULLOCH to the Hon. E. W. STAFFORD.

(No. 934.)
SIR,—

Chief Secretary's Office,

Melbourne, Victoria, 14th April, 1869.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of 19th ultimo, in which you express the desire that the Government of this Colony and New South Wales should mutually agree upon the time and the place for the meeting of the conference, and I enclose copy of a letter which I have accordingly addressed on the subject to the Colonial Secretary, Sydney.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington.

JAMES McCULLOCH.

Enclosure in No. 14.

The Hon. J. McCULLOCH to the Hon. J. ROBERTSON.

(No. 935.)

SIR,—

Chief Secretary's Office,
Melbourne, Victoria, 14th April, 1869.

I have the honor to inform you that a further letter has been received on the subject of the conference from the Colonial Secretary of New Zealand, in which Mr. Stafford intimates that it has been left to the Governments of New South Wales and Victoria to agree upon the best time and place for its meeting. As to the place of meeting, if the Legislature of Victoria was not in Session, Sydney or Melbourne would be equally convenient as far as the Government is concerned; but so long as the Session lasts, it would hardly be practicable, as I stated before, for any of the members of the Government to absent themselves from their places in Parliament in order to attend a conference held in Sydney. I cannot state when Parliament will be prorogued; but if the representatives of the other Colonies could meet at Melbourne without inconvenience to themselves, any time you may now appoint on their behalf for the assembling of the conference will be assented to by this Government, whether or not our Parliament is in Session.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Sydney.

I have, &c.,
JAMES McCULLOCH.

No. 15.

The Hon. E. W. STAFFORD to the Hon. J. ROBERTSON.

(No. 65.)

SIR,—

Colonial Secretary's Office,
Wellington, 29th April, 1869.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 3rd instant, respecting the time and place for the meeting of the proposed conference of delegates from the various Australasian Colonies.

I received at the same time a letter, dated 14th instant, from the Chief Secretary of Victoria, in reply to mine of the 19th ultimo, also addressed to you, enclosing a copy of a letter in which he informed you that, while the Session of the Victorian Parliament lasted, it would not be practicable for the delegates of that Colony to attend a conference at Sydney.

It has been the desire of this Government, after obtaining the assent of the Australian Governments to the proposal that a conference should take place, to leave the time and place of its meeting to the decision of those Governments—and accordingly delegates from this Colony have hitherto been prepared to attend whenever that decision was communicated to them; but, as intimated to you in my letter of the 19th March last, the requirement of their presence in the New Zealand Parliament would prevent their attendance at the conference after the middle of this month.

Under these circumstances, I do not think that the New Zealand delegates could conveniently attend any conference held before the 1st of October next; and accordingly I trust that you will be able, in concert with the other Australian Governments, to decide on and intimate to me some time after that date, and place of meeting, in order that no delay which can be avoided may take place in the consideration of the important subjects which it has been agreed to submit to the conference.

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

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, N.S.W.

[Letter of similar tenor and date, omitting the second paragraph, to the Chief Secretary, Victoria]

No. 16.

The Hon. J. ROBERTSON to the Hon. E. W. STAFFORD.

(No. 69-3,749.)

SIR,—

Colonial Secretary's Office,
Sydney, New South Wales, 29th May, 1869.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 29th ultimo, respecting the time and place of the meeting of the proposed conference of delegates from the various Australasian Colonies, and stating that the New Zealand delegates could not, owing to the requirement of their presence in Parliament, conveniently attend any conference held before the 1st of October next.

2. Under these circumstances, I have the honor to state that the only course open in the matter appears to be, to hold the conference here in October next; and to that effect I have accordingly apprised the Governments of the other Australian Colonies.

I have, &c.,
JOHN ROBERTSON.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary of New Zealand.

No. 17.

Mr. W. DARLING to Mr. GISBORNE.

SIR,—

Dunedin, Otago, 10th December, 1868.

Having observed in the public prints that there is a probability of the Panama line of steamers collapsing through want of pecuniary assistance, I therefore take the liberty of stating, for the information of the Government, that I believe the United States Government would contribute a liberal subsidy towards its support, as the stoppage of such a line would be a serious inconvenience to the commerce they are desirous of fostering with these Colonies.

Prior to the war in the States, the establishment of such a line as that now running was contemplated in New York.

If the American Government had at the first been asked to contribute towards its support, I believe it would have been glad to do so. I derived this information from conversations with some of the merchants in New York.

In the event of the Government or the Company opening up negotiations with the United States Government on this subject, I think it would be advisable to obtain the co-operation of the New York Chamber of Commerce.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary.

I have, &c.,
W. DARLING.

No. 18.

The Hon. E. W. STAFFORD to His Honor Mr. Justice JOHNSTON.

(No. 67-69, 215.) Colonial Secretary's Office, (Judicial Branch),
Wellington, 28th January, 1869.

SIR,— This Government has proposed to the Australian Governments the advisability of a conference of delegates being held for the purpose of considering certain important matters of joint interest to the Australasian Colonies.

Replies have been received from the several Governments expressing an unanimous assent to such proposal, and it has been suggested that one of the subjects of deliberation should be the establishment of an Australasian Court of Appeal and Legal Comity between the Colonies. Anticipating that such a conference will shortly be held, and that this subject may be submitted to it, it is important that the New Zealand delegates should be fortified by the opinion of the Judges of the Supreme Court in this Colony on the advisability, and, in that case, the best mode of affecting the object proposed, and I shall feel obliged if your Honor would, either singly or in concert with the other Judges, favour the Government with your views in reference to this project, and with any suggestions which it may appear to you to require.

His Honor Mr. Justice Johnston, Wellington.

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

No. 68.—Similar letter to His Honor Mr. Justice Ward.

No. 69.—Similar letter to His Honor Mr. Justice Gresson.

No. 70.—Similar letter to His Honor Mr. Justice Richmond.

No. 71.—Similar letter to His Honor Sir G. A. Arney, Chief Justice.

No. 19.

His Honor Mr. Justice GRESSON to the Hon. E. W. STAFFORD.

SIR,— Judge's Chambers, Christchurch, 4th February, 1869.

No. 69—69-275,
January 28, 1869.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, of number and date in the margin, informing me that the New Zealand Government has proposed to the Australian Governments the advisability of a conference of delegates being held, for the purpose of considering certain important matters of joint interest to the Australian Colonies, and that replies have been received from the several Governments expressing an unanimous assent to such proposal, and that it has been suggested that one of the subjects of deliberation should be the establishment of an Australian Court of Appeal and Legal Comity between the Colonies, and, in anticipation of such a conference being shortly held, requesting my views, either singly or in concert with the other Judges of the Supreme Court, on the advisability and best mode of effecting the object proposed. I have the honor to state in reply that, as I think the object of the Government would be best effected by procuring the unanimous opinion of the Judges, if such opinion can be obtained, I propose to defer expressing my views, or offering any suggestions on the subject, until I shall have had an opportunity of learning the opinion of His Honor the Chief Justice and the other Judges, to some of whom I am writing on the subject by this mail.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington.

I have, &c.,
H. B. GRESSON.

No. 20.

His Honor Mr. Justice JOHNSTON to the Hon. E. W. STAFFORD.

SIR,— Judge's Chambers, Wellington, 23rd February, 1869.

No. 67—69-215.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of 28th January, and numbered as in the margin, and in answer I have the honor to state that I shall take this important subject into my immediate consideration. I should be glad, however, before giving any definite answer, to have the opportunity of communicating with my brother Judges.

This reply has been accidentally overlooked.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary
(Judicial Branch).

I have, &c.,
ALEXANDER J. JOHNSTON.

No. 21.

His Honor Chief Justice Sir G. A. ARNEY to the Hon. E. W. STAFFORD.

SIR,— Auckland, 26th February, 1869.

Referring to the question which the Government have suggested for the consideration of the Judges of the Supreme Court, viz., whether one of the subjects to be brought before the conference of

delegates from the Australian Colonies about to be held should not be the establishment of an Australian Court of Appeal and Legal Comity; as it is scarcely practicable for the Judges of the Supreme Court to carry on a discussion of such a subject by interchange of correspondence through the post, I deem it right to express my individual view (for what it may be worth) upon the question in a few words. I think that, if the establishment of such a tribunal would tend to draw closer together the relations between the various Australian Colonies, leading them to consolidate their interests and to harmonize their institutions, it would be most desirable. In prospect, however remote, of such a result, I think the subject may well form one for deliberation before the "delegates."

I confess, however, that I do not quite understand what is meant by an "Australian Court of Appeal," how it is to be constituted, how worked, nor even over what causes or what persons it is to exert its judicial authority. Assuming it to be constituted by Act of Imperial Parliament, and so to proceed from one central source of jurisdiction, I should yet fear that, having regard to the geographical position of New Zealand, to the scope and nature of its local Legislature, and to the scheme of practice and procedure in its courts of justice, especially of the Supreme Court, the cases in which the litigants of New Zealand could avail themselves of a Court of Appeal common to the other Australian Colonies would be extremely rare—and even as between the other Australian Colonies I should fear that the diversity of their local enactments would oppose an impediment to the successful working of a Court of Common Appeal, except in occasional instances. I think it will hardly suffice that the laws of the Australian Colonies are based upon certain fundamental principles common to all—*e.g.*, the common law and the law of merchant. I should think that, before an Australian Court of Appeal can be worked satisfactorily, or even become generally useful, those branches of the law in which the want of a closer inter-colonial relation may be most commonly felt, such as the customs and the law of bankruptcy, and parts of the criminal law, should first be brought together and compacted on some common system,—and this not only as regards their general provisions, but also (in some degree at least) as regards the practice and procedure of the Courts by which they are administered. When Colonies are confederate under one paramount jurisdiction, the course is smooth to a common Court of Appeal; but I am not sufficiently informed on the subject to perceive how New Zealand can avail herself of an Australian Court of Appeal, unless her laws upon which appeals are to be heard shall be first assimilated to some system of law common to all the Australian Colonies with herself.

Even then, I fear that the distance of New Zealand from Australia would stand too often in the way, whether the subject-matter of an appeal to the projected tribunal should lie in New Zealand or in one of the Australian Colonies.

But all such matters are for the better judgment of the conference. I merely presume to allude to them least I should be misunderstood in expressing the opinion that the subject might, and perhaps ought to be considered by the conference of delegates.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary,
Wellington.

I have, &c.,
GEORGE ALFRED ARNEY,
Chief Justice.

No. 22.

The Hon. E. W. STAFFORD to the Hon. JOHN JOHNSTON.

(No. 184.)

Colonial Secretary's Office,
Wellington, 3rd March, 1869.

SIR,—

I have the honor to enclose copies of a correspondence between this Government and the Australian Governments relative to a proposed conference of delegates from each Colony to consider the commercial relations of the Australasian Colonies with Great Britain, foreign countries, and each other, and other subjects of intercolonial importance specified in that correspondence.

You will gather from a perusal of these papers that the Governments of all the Colonies concerned are anxious that this conference should take place, and that the only points as yet undetermined are the place and time of meeting. I do not, however, anticipate much difficulty in the settlement of these questions, and think it probable that the conference will meet either at Sydney or Melbourne about the end of this month.

Mr. Hall will be one of the delegates from this Colony, and the Government would be glad if you would act as the other delegate, and contribute the valuable aid towards the satisfactory adjustment of matters of such great importance to the interests of the whole of Australasia, which your experience of the principal subjects to be brought before the notice of the conference would enable you to supply.

The Government proposes to defray the cost of your passages by sea and land, and to allow three guineas per diem to cover your expenses while you are engaged in the work of the conference.

The Hon. John Johnston, Wellington.

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

No. 23.

The Hon. JOHN JOHNSTON to the Hon. E. W. STAFFORD.

SIR,—

Lombard Street, Wellington, 10th March, 1869.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of 3rd March, containing copies of a correspondence between the Government of New Zealand and the Australian Governments relative to a proposed conference of delegates from each Colony to consider the commercial relations of the Australian Colonies with Great Britain, foreign Countries, and each other, and other subjects of intercolonial importance specified in that correspondence, informing me that Mr. Hall will be one of the delegates from this Colony, and asking me to be the other.

In reply, I shall be happy to be such delegate, if I am not required to leave Wellington for Australia during present month.
 The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington. I have, &c.,
 JOHN JOHNSTON.

No. 24.

The Hon. E. W. STAFFORD to the Hon. JOHN HALL.

(No. 217.) Colonial Secretary's Office,
 Wellington, 12th March, 1869.
 SIR,— With reference to the proposed Commercial Conference of Australian Colonies, I do myself the honor to express the hope that you may be able to proceed to Australia as a delegate on the part of the New Zealand Government. The Hon. John Johnston has consented to act in a similar capacity.

I would also observe that as a not improbable result of the conference would be the appointment of a delegation to the United States on the part of this and other Colonies, this Government would, in such event, strongly desire that you should represent New Zealand in such delegation.

I have received no further information as to the time or place of meeting of the conference than that of which you are already aware from the replies received from the respective Australian Colonies with respect to the proposal for a conference.

The Hon. John Hall, Christchurch.

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

No. 25.

The Hon. JOHN HALL to the Hon. E. W. STAFFORD.

CHRISTCHURCH, 16th March, 1869.
 SIR,— I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 12th instant, requesting that I will, in conjunction with the Hon. John Johnston, represent the Colony of New Zealand at the approaching conference of delegates from the Australian Colonies; and also that in the event of the conference resulting in the appointment of a delegation to the United States, I would represent the Colony in such delegation.

In reply, I have the honor to accept the important duty which the Government proposes to intrust to me, and will endeavour to discharge it to the best of my ability.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary.

I have, &c.,
 JOHN HALL.

No. 26.

The Hon. J. V. BAGOT to the Hon. E. W. STAFFORD.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA: Chief Secretary's Office,
 Adelaide, 20th April, 1869.
 SIR,— I have the honor to transmit herewith copy of letter I have this day addressed to the Hon. the Colonial Secretary, New South Wales, on the subject of the approaching conference of delegates.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington.

I have, &c.,
 JOHN V. BAGOT.

Enclosure in No. 26.

The Hon. J. V. BAGOT to the Hon. J. ROBERTSON.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA: Chief Secretary's Office,
 Adelaide, 20th April, 1869.
 SIR,— I have the honor, by direction of His Excellency Sir James Ferguson, to inform you, in reply to your letter of the 4th December last, that this Government will be glad to consider the matter of the Murray River Customs at the approaching conference of delegates.

As regards the date of meeting alluded to in your later communication of the 3rd instant, I am to inform you that it will be convenient for this Government that the conference should assemble at the time you suggest, viz., early in June next, either at Sydney or Melbourne.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary,
 New South Wales.I have, &c.,
 JOHN V. BAGOT.

No. 27.

His Honor Mr. Justice RICHMOND to the Hon. E. W. STAFFORD.

NELSON, 5th May, 1869.
 SIR,— I have to excuse my seeming discourtesy and neglect in not sooner replying to your letter (No. 67—69-215) respecting the proposed conference of Australian Governments, and the establishment of a general Court of Appeal for the Australasian Colonies. The fact is, I feel the subjects referred to to be of very great difficulty, and have not known, nor do I now know, how to reply to your inquiry.

The matter has been mentioned in correspondence between one of my brother Judges and myself, and I believe the general opinion of the Judges, in which I fully concur, is, that they should have the opportunity of conferring together before attempting definitively to advise the Government on the subject.

With regard to the establishment of an Australasian Court of Appeal, I presume that no one would think it desirable to take away the final appeal to Her Majesty in Council. The only means which can be contemplated must, I apprehend, be the establishment of a General Court of Appeal, either in addition to or in substitution for such Courts of Appeal as already exist in the several colonies. At present I confess it appears to me that litigants in our Courts would not be benefited by such a measure, and that the advancement of the science of jurisprudence in these Colonies (which might be one end of the measure), would not be so greatly promoted as to compensate for the necessary expense of time and money which must be incurred.

Another important subject is the question whether barristers and solicitors of each of the Australasian Colonies should be admissible, *ad eundem*, in all the other Colonies of the group. I see no objection to such a measure, provided it be settled that the terms of original admission in each Colony shall be the same. In any case, I am strongly inclined to think that, on a special retainer, the barristers of any of the superior Courts of Australasia should have audience in the Courts of all the Colonies.

I forward these imperfect suggestions for your consideration, feeling, as I have already said, my own inability to advise the Government satisfactorily on the various questions raised without the aid of full and careful discussion—feeling moreover that these questions may involve wide political considerations, and probably ought not to be answered from a merely juridical point of view.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary.

I have, &c.,
C. W. RICHMOND.

No. 28.

The Hon. Sir R. DRY to the Hon. E. W. STAFFORD.

SIR,—

Tasmania, Colonial Secretary's Office, 7th May, 1869.

Referring to previous correspondence which has taken place, with a view to the meeting in Sydney of delegates from the Australian Colonies and New Zealand, to consider the subjects of Free Trade, &c., I have now the honor to forward herewith copy of a communication which I addressed to the Colonial Secretary of New South Wales relative thereto.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington.

I have, &c.,
RICHARD DRY.

Enclosure in No. 28.

The Hon. T. D. CHAPMAN to the Hon. J. ROBERTSON.

SIR,—

Tasmania, Colonial Secretary's Office, 26th April, 1869.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 3rd instant, suggesting that the proposed meeting of the delegates should take place at Sydney, during the second week in June next.

In reply, I desire to say that this Government will be prepared to send a delegate to Sydney at the proposed time, should your suggestion be finally adopted by the other Colonies interested.

I have, &c.,
T. D. CHAPMAN.

No. 29.

The Hon. J. ROBERTSON to the Hon. E. W. STAFFORD.

SIR,—

Colonial Secretary's Office,

Sydney, New South Wales, 29th May, 1869.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 29th ultimo, respecting the time and place of the meeting of the proposed conference of delegates from the various Australasian Colonies, and stating that the New Zealand delegates could not, owing to the requirement of their presence in Parliament, conveniently attend any conference held before the 1st of October next.

2. Under these circumstances I have the honor to state that the only course open in the matter appears to be to hold the conference here in October next; and to that effect I have accordingly apprised the Governments of the other Australian Colonies.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, New Zealand.

I have, &c.,
JOHN ROBERTSON.

No. 30.

Mr. W. DARLING to the Hon. E. W. STAFFORD.

SIR,—

Dunedin, 5th June, 1869.

I take the liberty of addressing you to solicit your attention to the advisability of the Government entering into some arrangement with the United States Government for the free admission of New Zealand wool into that country.

I am aware that, last Session, such a measure was proposed in the Assembly, to be undertaken in conjunction with the other Australian Colonies, but I do not know if any action has been taken in the matter.

The necessity for such a measure has been forcibly brought under my notice, as I am a buyer of wool on American account, and could afford to pay from five to twenty per cent. (according to descrip-

tion) more than its present value here, provided it were duty free in the United States, but the present duties there prevent me from operating. I may state, too, that judging from what I know of the Americans, they would be glad to enter into a commercial arrangement with these Colonies.

I believe that if a Commission were at once appointed by the several Colonies specially to proceed to England, to obtain the sanction of the Imperial Government, and then go to the United States to complete the arrangement, the ensuing clip of wool would, to a large extent, be shipped to New York and Boston, where the market for it is almost coextensive with the local one in England.

It is hardly probable that the Imperial Government would endeavour to thwart the objects of such a Commission; but if they were firmly demanded—demanded to the extent of a threat of a severance between the Colonies and the Mother Country—I am of opinion they would then give way, and sanction such a measure.

But if it were found impossible to obtain Imperial sanction to the matter, I believe that such a Commission going to the United States Government, and if it were supported by some of the leading merchants of New York and Boston, would obtain the admission of Colonial wool free, or almost free, of duty, without any reduction of duties on American goods in the Colonies, and perhaps by that means avoid the legal formula of an international treaty. Some official and statistical information in reference to these Colonies would soon convince the Americans of the advisability of the matter.

One great drawback to American trade with these Colonies at the present time is the absence of return cargoes for the vessels which bring American goods here.

If some commercial arrangement were entered into between these Colonies and the United States, I am of opinion that the Americans would speedily establish a line of first-class steamers between them—starting from San Francisco—and, perhaps, without asking for any pecuniary assistance from the Colonies.

If there is any further information you desire on this subject, I will be most happy to give it you if it lies in my power.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington.

I have, &c.,
W. DARLING.

No. 31.

The Hon. J. T. BAGOT to the Hon. E. W. STAFFORD.

SIR,—

Chief Secretary's Office, Adelaide, 23rd June, 1869.

I have the honor, by desire of His Excellency Sir James Ferguson, to forward herewith copies of letters addressed by this Government to that of New South Wales, on the subject of the proposed conference of delegates.

I have, &c.,

JOHN T. BAGOT,
Chief Secretary.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary.

Enclosure 1 in No. 31.

The Hon. J. T. BAGOT to the Hon. J. ROBERTSON.

SIR,—

South Australia: Chief Secretary's Office,
Adelaide, 16th June, 1869.

I have the honor, by desire of His Excellency Sir James Ferguson, to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 29th ultimo, suggesting October as the date for holding the proposed conference, and in reply to inform you that the objection stated by the Government of New Zealand to an earlier date, namely Parliamentary duties, would also prevent this Government from being represented, should the conference be held in October.

I have, &c.,

JOHN T. BAGOT,
Chief Secretary.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, New South Wales.

Enclosure 2 in No. 31.

The Hon. J. T. BAGOT to the Hon. J. ROBERTSON.

SIR,—

South Australia: Chief Secretary's Office,
Adelaide, 22nd June, 1869.

Referring to my letter of the 16th instant, I have now the honor, by desire of His Excellency Sir James Ferguson, to suggest that, as October, the period mentioned in your letter of the 29th ultimo, appears to be convenient to the several Governments concerned, the difficulty as regards the attendance of delegates from this Province might be obviated by holding the conference at Adelaide instead of at Sydney, as originally proposed.

I have, &c.,

JOHN T. BAGOT,
Chief Secretary.

The Hon. Colonial Secretary, New South Wales.

No. 32.

Mr. H. HALLORAN to the Hon. W. GISBORNE.

SIR,—

Colonial Secretary's Office,
Sydney, New South Wales, 10th August, 1869.

With reference to correspondence respecting the Intercolonial Conference proposed to be held in this City in October next, I have the honor to inclose, for your information, copy of an

identical letter which I have addressed to the Government of the Colonies of Victoria, South Australia, Queensland, and Tasmania, intimating the intention of this Government to bring forward for discussion, on the occasion referred to, the subject of telegraphic communication between the Australian Colonies and Europe by way of Java.

I have, &c.,
(for the Colonial Secretary)
HENRY HALLORAN,
Under Secretary.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington.

Enclosure in No. 32.

Mr. HENRY HALLORAN to the Hon. the CHIEF SECRETARIES of Victoria and South Australia, and the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARIES of Queensland and Tasmania.

Colonial Secretary's Office,
Sydney, New South Wales, 10th August, 1869.

SIR,—

With reference to the correspondence respecting the Intercolonial Conference proposed to be held in this city in October next, I have the honor to inform you that it is the intention of this Government to bring forward for discussion on that occasion the subject of telegraphic communication between the Australian Colonies and Europe by way of Java.

I have, &c.,
(for the Colonial Secretary)
HENRY HALLORAN,
Under Secretary.

The Hon. the Chief Secretaries of Victoria and South Australia, and the Hon. the Colonial Secretaries of Queensland and Tasmania.

No. 33.

The Hon. W. GISBORNE to the Hon. J. ROBERTSON.

Colonial Secretary's Office,
Wellington, 31st August, 1869.

SIR,—

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th instant, forwarding a copy of a letter which you have addressed to the Governments of Victoria, South Australia, Queensland, and Tasmania, intimating the intention of the New South Wales Government to bring the subject of telegraphic communication between the Australian Colonies and Europe, by way of Java, before the Intercolonial Conference.

I have, &c.,
W. GISBORNE.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, New South Wales.
