

1881.

NEW ZEALAND.

PROPOSED ALTERATIONS AND REDUCTIONS IN AGENT-GENERAL'S OFFICE

(CORRESPONDENCE WITH SIR F. D. BELL).

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

No. 1.

The Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY to the Hon. Sir F. D. BELL.

SIR,—

Colonial Secretary's Office, 15th November, 1880.

Herewith I beg leave to forward to you copy of correspondence (*vide* A.—5B, 1881) which has passed between the Government and Sir Julius Vogel on the subject of the staff of the Agent-General's office, and the reorganization which has become necessary in consequence of the reduction of the vote for the department to the sum of three thousand pounds (£3,000). These papers will place you fully in possession of the views of the Government on the subject.

You will probably find on your arrival that Sir J. Vogel has, in pursuance of the instructions contained in my letter of the 10th September, already taken steps to effect reductions in the staff of the department. In any case it is the desire of the Government that you should, on assuming office as Agent-General, proceed with such reorganization of the staff, if not already completed, as may appear to you necessary for the purpose of giving effect to their views.

With this object you are fully authorized to make such changes in the *personnel* of the staff, by removal and appointment, as may appear to you to be called for. In the case of the Secretaryship to the Agent-General, however, should you think any alteration, other than that which Sir J. Vogel has already been requested to make, desirable, you will be good enough to communicate with me before taking any steps in the matter.

As immigration has been discontinued, the number of cash transactions passing through your office must be very limited. Under these circumstances I would suggest, as worthy of your consideration, whether anything could be done, after consulting with the Auditor-General, by way of amalgamating the duties of the Accountant and of the Auditor.

You are so fully acquainted with the wishes of Parliament, and of Ministers, on the subject of the cost of the public service of the colony, that I feel sure I need not urge upon you the desirability of the utmost economy being practised in dealing with this question.

The Hon. Sir F. D. Bell, M.L.C., Wellington.

I have, &c.,
THOMAS DICK.

No. 2.

The Hon. Sir F. D. BELL to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY.

SIR,—

Shag Valley, Otago, 24th November, 1880.

I have had the honor to receive your letter, transmitting copies of the correspondence which has passed between the Government and Sir Julius Vogel on the subject of the staff in the Agent-General's office.

It will be my first care, on assuming the duties of Agent-General, to give effect to your instructions, so that the expenditure of the office may be brought within the vote. I hope to see the Controller-General at Melbourne on my way to England, on the subject of amalgamating the duties of Accountant and Auditor in London; and I can see no reason why this should not be done.

The Government may thoroughly depend on my enforcing the utmost economy in the London office, and on receiving from me full information as to the future working of the office, as soon as possible after my arrival.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, &c.

I have, &c.,
F. D. BELL.

No. 3.

The Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY to the Hon. Sir F. D. BELL.

SIR,—

Colonial Secretary's Office, Wellington, 6th December, 1880.

I have the honor, in continuation of my letter No. 1880, of the 15th ultimo, to enclose for your information copy of further correspondence (*see* A.—5B, 1881, Agent-General to Premier, 6th October, 1880; Premier to Agent-General, 4th December, 1880) with Sir Julius Vogel on the subject of the staff of the Agent-General's office.

The Hon. Sir F. D. Bell, &c., Dunedin.

I have, &c.,

THOMAS DICK.

No. 4.

The Hon. Sir F. D. BELL to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY

SIR,—

Dunedin, 14th December, 1880.

I have had the honor to receive to-day your letter of the 6th instant, enclosing copies of further correspondence with Sir Julius Vogel on the subject of the staff of the Agent-General's office.

I observe that the Government have postponed coming to a final decision on the representations of Mr. Kennaway and Mr. McKellar until the receipt of the further statements which those gentlemen propose to submit. I shall be glad to receive in due time the intimation of that decision for my guidance.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, &c.

I have, &c.,

F. D. BELL.

No. 5.

The Hon. the PREMIER to the AGENT-GENERAL.

SIR,—

Government Offices, Wellington, 26th February, 1881.

I have received your predecessor's letter No. 972, of 30th November, enclosing copy of correspondence between himself and the Agent-General's Department, respecting instructions that had been given to Sir Julius Vogel to reduce the salary of the Secretary from £800 to £600 a year—amongst the enclosures being a long letter from Mr. Kennaway, in which he urges various reasons why this reduction should not be made, and he contends that to make it would be unjust to him. These documents have been carefully considered by the Government, in connection with others in which Sir Julius Vogel communicates representations made to him by Mr. McKellar, the Accountant to the Department, against the reduction of his salary from £500 to £300 a year.

I have the honour to request that you will communicate to those gentlemen the decisions of the Government, which are—

(1.) As to Mr. Kennaway. The reduction directed to be made in his salary was not due to any want of appreciation of his services. It was made because Parliament very largely reduced the vote for the department, and because the work and the responsibility attaching to the office Mr. Kennaway holds will be much less than they have been. For these reasons, the Government regret that they cannot, in response to Mr. Kennaway's representations, depart from their decision as to the reduction of the salary.

(2.) As to Mr. McKellar. The Government did not consider, nor have they stated, that £300 would be a proper salary for an accountant of Mr. McKellar's standing, with duties to discharge such as did fall upon that gentleman. Indeed the instructions to Sir Julius Vogel were explicit that, as the expenditure through the Agency and its operation generally had been so very greatly reduced, there was no longer need for an accountant at a salary of £500 a year, and that therefore a more economical arrangement must be made.

Sir F. Dillon Bell,

Agent-General for New Zealand, London.

I have, &c.,

JOHN HALL.

No. 6.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY.

SIR,—

Westminster Chambers, London, S.W., 19th May, 1881.

On receiving the decision of the Government respecting the salaries of the Secretary and the Accountant, I applied myself again to the question of whether the cost of this office could be brought within the £3,000 voted last session.

Though I have prepared full particulars for your information, I have not time to send these by this mail; but, as Parliament may be in session next month, I will not delay stating the conclusion at which I have been obliged to arrive, that it is not possible for me to carry on the office for the £3,000.

In your letter to my predecessor, dated 10th September last, directing the application of the vote, you put down the clerks at £350, and the rent and contingencies at £360. Now, the rent alone, under the existing lease, is £400, and contingencies for the three years ending 31st March, 1881, have averaged rather more than £350, of which postage alone has exceeded £100. This is enough, I think, to show why I cannot compress these items into the sum stated in your letter.

I have given myself time to see what I could do to obey, as I would if I could, the order of the House. But I know what work is, and I may say that, with the exception of the West Coast Commission, I have not for eighteen years done so much continuous work as since I came to England. You may be sure, when I say that, of the other officers having had their share of it; indeed, the details that have to be attended to in the orders that come from the several departments are of a kind requiring

not only accuracy, but separate attention and time, which the Agent-General himself cannot give without neglecting the larger things he has to look after. The Government may rely on my doing what is fairly possible to keep the expense down; but, so long as there is an Agent-General here at all, I am sure the House will not ask me to do more.

I have, therefore, to request that you will be pleased to put down a vote of £3,500 for the financial year 1881-82, and I will do my best not to spend it all. As soon as I get a little leisure, I shall send you full details to guide you in any explanations you may be asked for in Supply

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, &c.

I have, &c.,
F. D. BELL.

No. 7.

The Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY to the AGENT-GENERAL.

SIR,—

Colonial Secretary's Office, Wellington, 15th July, 1881.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 19th May last, stating that after due consideration you have concluded that it is not possible to carry on the Agent-General's Office for £3,000, and requesting that a sum of £3,500 may be placed on the estimates for that purpose.

In reply, I have the honor to inform you that the Government have increased the amount placed on the estimates for your department from £3,330, at which it was originally put, to £3,500, in accordance with your request, having full reliance on your judgment that you will act with a due regard to economy of the public funds.

The Agent-General for New Zealand, London.

I have, &c.,
THOMAS DICK.

