

I had been engaged for some time in the preparation of a paper, to form the sequel of one I read two years ago at the Colonial Institute, with the double object of inviting a good reception for your new loans, and of winning the favour of your consol bondholders to a conversion of their debentures into stock. I had described the advantages of inscription, and had assigned the chief merit of it to Sir Julius Vogel. Nor had there been any the less pleasure to me in the testimony I was bearing to the labour of others that by no possibility could any credit or honour for it ever come to me. In happy ignorance of the manner in which my letter was being received by yourself and by Sir Julius Vogel, I had allowed myself to hope that my paper might be of some service to the colony. It must surely be unnecessary for me to say that the reading of it is made an impossibility for me now.

I agree with every word you say about the Agent-General not meddling in Imperial distinctions. At no time of my life would I not have thought it a disgrace to ask for a decoration for myself; and, as for asking, in my capacity as Agent-General, for decorations for other people, I should not only think it a gross impropriety, but it would be looked upon here as a piece of vulgar presumption and impertinence. I am speaking, of course, of any act done by me as Agent-General. As a member of one of the great orders, and within my own order, I am not supposing the Government to claim that I should come to them for guidance.

I gathered it to be your desire that I should lay all the papers before Sir Penrose Julian, and have accordingly done so.

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

F. D. BELL.

No. 4.

The PREMIER to the AGENT-GENERAL.

SIR,—

New Zealand. Premier's Office, Wellington, 9th March, 1885.

I had the honour on the 26th January last to simply acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 30th November. My leaving almost immediately thereafter for a visit to the West Coast Goldfields has prevented me from replying earlier.

I may state that it is with no desire to continue the correspondence that I now reply. If, however, your letter were left unanswered there might arise misconceptions as to the meaning of my letter of the 29th September.

You say that "Mr. Mackrell never asked me to bring any claim before the Government. I never put forward any for him. He never made any complaint to me of his professional remuneration. He never detracted in any way from the honour due to Sir Julius Vogel. I never made any solicitation of any kind whatever to him. I never said that the Stock Agents were going to record in any report of theirs that he was the inventor of the inscribed-stock scheme." As to this I have to say that I did not state that Mr. Mackrell asked you to bring his claim. What I said was: "He does not seem, however, to have asked for your interference in his behalf, nor to have complained to you, as Agent-General, that the remuneration he received as professional legal adviser to the then Agent-General regarding the inscribing of stock was insufficient."

As to the statement that you never made any solicitation of any kind whatever to him, the paragraph of your letter of the 6th August was this: "Last March, however, circumstances happened in which Mr. Mackrell thought I might be of a little use to him, and it became necessary for the part he had taken in inscription to be mentioned in a high quarter. He therefore *waived* his previous unwillingness to be specially named in connection with it, and gave me the memorandum of which I transmit a copy to you herewith." And on that I based the statements I made. You say: "What I did say was, that he had told me that the original conception of a stock to be inscribed at the Bank of England was his; and this is now confirmed by Sir Julius himself." It seems to me, after a re-perusal of your first letter and Sir Julius Vogel's memorandum, that the point was that you said that the original conception of inscription of stock was Mr. Mackrell's. Indeed, the last part of your letter of the 6th August says: "And as Mr. Mackrell has now claimed the origination of the idea," &c.

I do not wish to derogate from any credit Mr. Mackrell has obtained for his long and arduous services as legal adviser to the Government of New Zealand; but I hardly think, if the only action of his for which he can claim credit is the suggestion of the bank for the purpose named, he would have desired it to be mentioned.

I accept to the full your statement that you did not mean to detract from the merit due to Sir Julius Vogel in starting the inscription of stock for the colonies, and regret if my letter should have seemed to accuse you of doing so. All I noted was that you delayed from March to August in forwarding your letter.

I hope you will pardon me if I fail to see the connection between our correspondence and the reading of a paper at the Colonial Institute. Your last paper was read with great interest by all colonists, and New Zealand was much indebted to you for the care and ability which the paper displayed. What has the reading of a paper to do with the correspondence between us? The reference to Mr. Mackrell was, you state, to be made by the Stock Agents in their report. There was nothing in your first letter about a paper for the Colonial Institute, but if there had been I do not see why, if I have to point out my non-agreement with some inferences I drew from your letter, that you should be restrained from reading any paper before the Institute.

As to the meddling with the granting of Imperial distinctions, I understand you to say that you agree with me that no Agent-General, as such, should recommend any one for Imperial distinction unless with the sanction or at the request of the Government he represents. We are thus agreed on this point. You, however, assume that, as a member of one of the great orders, and within your own order, you suppose the Government will not claim that you should come to them for