

No. 7.

(No. 35.)

SIR,—

Government House, Wellington, 23rd June, 1898.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch (New Zealand, No. 32) dated the 5th May, 1898, respecting the state of affairs in the Cook Islands.

I had pleasure in informing you by cable on the 18th instant that my Ministers have reconsidered their decision, and they agree to recommend Parliament to continue the present arrangements.

They have decided to recommend a successor to Mr. Moss as British Resident at Rarotonga, and the further matters in your despatch are still under their consideration.

I shall hope to fully inform you by next mail.

The Right Hon. J. Chamberlain,
Secretary of State for the Colonies.

I have, &c.,
RANFURLY.

No. 8.

(No. 36.)

SIR,—

Government House, Wellington, 5th July, 1898.

With reference to your despatch (New Zealand—General), dated the 4th February, 1898, respecting the international code of signals, I have the honour to bring to your notice that the New Zealand flag, which is used on board the Government steamers, is not shown amongst the flags which appear in the new code-book. This flag, which has been authorised by the Imperial Government, is a blue ensign with the Jack in the top corner and four red stars with white borders on the fly of the ensign.

2. My Ministers request me to ask that the stars should in future be placed in a white circle on the fly of the ensign, similar to the circle which is to appear on the red ensign.

3. As regards the red ensign for the use of colonial merchant vessels, my Ministers recommend that sanction should be given in the case of New Zealand vessels to the placing of four red stars in the white circle which is to appear on the fly of the ensign.

My Ministers also observe that the signals do not make provision for a signal to be used by vessels requiring the services of a steam-tug by night. The signal as used in New Zealand is as follows: The master of every vessel requiring the services of a steam-tug by night shall show at intervals two blue-lights simultaneously, or shall exhibit at intervals two flare-up lights simultaneously, as far as possible, provided that the distance apart shall not exceed 300 ft. Either of these signals is to be shown in such a position as to be seen from the harbour or look-out station.

The Right Hon. J. Chamberlain,
Secretary of State for the Colonies.

I have, &c.,
RANFURLY.

No. 9.

(No. 39.)

SIR,—

Government House, Wellington, 5th July, 1898.

With reference to your despatch circular, dated the 21st March, 1898, relative to merchant shipping legislation, I have the honour to enclose a memorandum I have received from my Premier, and signed by the Minister of Marine.

The Right Hon. J. Chamberlain,
Secretary of State for the Colonies.

I have, &c.,
RANFURLY.

Enclosure.

Hon. Premier.

I APPEND hereto a *précis* showing the points of difference between the Imperial and New Zealand law, so far as it relates to Courts of inquiry into shipping casualties.