

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND MR. JUSTICE GRESSON.

No. 1.

Copy of a Letter from the Hon. HENRY SEWELL to Mr. JUSTICE GRESSON.

MY DEAR JUDGE,—

Wellington, 14th September, 1865.

Will you excuse me for transmitting, somewhat irregularly, an application respecting a prisoner under sentence. The mail will leave so early to-morrow morning that I cannot send it in the usual form. I am now writing after office hours and my clerks are gone.

Mr. Johnston, who writes the letter, is a merchant of this place, upon whose statements I know great reliance can be placed.

Could it be proper to commute the sentence for a money payment? Pray pardon me for thus troubling you in an un-official way.

I have, &c.,

His Honor Mr. Justice Gresson.

HENRY SEWELL.

Enclosure in No. 1.

Copy of a Letter from the Hon. JOHN JOHNSTON to the Hon. HENRY SEWELL.

SIR,—

Wellington, 14th September, 1865.

I learn to-day that Mr. Armstrong, an old colonist at Akaroa, has been found guilty of a common assault, and sentenced by Mr. Justice Gresson to six months imprisonment with hard labour. I have known Mr. Armstrong for the last seventeen or eighteen years, and know him to be a very industrious, well-behaved person, always anxious to improve his social position and to earn the esteem of all those with whom he comes in contact. This worthy man, for a comparatively venial offence, finds himself sentenced to imprisonment for a term of six months, and to the loathsome companionship in hard labor of all the scoundrels who may be undergoing their sentences in the same gaol. I am told he seems quite heartbroken.

I have no doubt that Mr. Gresson did not design to inflict so cruel a penalty upon Mr. Armstrong, and under the circumstances venture to request you to interfere, so far as you may feel yourself justified in doing. I am sure Mr. Armstrong would cheerfully pay any fine which Mr. Gresson might think fit to impose as a proper penalty in lieu of the sentence already given—indeed, so high is the opinion I have formed of Mr. Armstrong in the very long time I have known him, and so sensible am I of the extreme misery he will endure under the existing sentence, that I would willingly myself pay any fine which it may be held right to inflict instead of it.

I hope that both yourself and Mr. Gresson will recognize that in making this application I am moved solely by a strong feeling of sympathy for the sufferings of an old and worthy colonist.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. Henry Sewell, Attorney-General, &c.

JOHN JOHNSTON.

No. 2.

Mr. JUSTICE GRESSON to the Hon. HENRY SEWELL.

SIR,—

Judge's Chambers, Christchurch, 19th September, 1865.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 14th instant, enclosing a letter from Mr. John Johnston, of Wellington, expressing his views upon a sentence lately passed by me on the prisoner named in the margin, at present undergoing sentence in Lyttelton Gaol.

I beg to decline expressing any opinion on that letter, which I return herewith.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Attorney-General, &c., Wellington.

H. B. GRESSON.