

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.,

JOHN ROBERTSON.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, New Zealand.

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 Dépôt 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.,

JAMES McCULLOCH.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, New Zealand.

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