

a considerable extent the commercial interest of the whole of the Australian Colonies, you suggest a conference of delegates, which you propose should be held at Sydney in the early part of February next, for the purpose of ascertaining the position of New Zealand, in conjunction with the several Australian Colonies, with regard to the commercial treaties made by Great Britain with Foreign Powers, and at the same time considering other matters of a kindred nature.

In reply, I have the honor to inform you that this Government concurs in the action contemplated, and impressed with the benefits which may be expected to accrue to the whole of the Colonies from the labours of delegates appointed to inquire into the important subjects to which your circular has reference, accordingly, upon the re-assembling of Parliament (at the end of this month), the necessary steps will be taken to procure authority for the appointment of a delegate or delegates to represent Queensland at the proposed conference.

In dealing with this question, the Government have had before them the replies sent to you from the Colonies of Tasmania and New South Wales; and without further adverting to the opinions expressed therein than indorsing the suggestion made by Mr. Robertson, that the meeting should take place in the early part of March, instead of February, as recommended by you, I would observe that this Government is of opinion that the following matters ought to form the principal subjects of deliberation:—

- 1st, To ascertain the exact position and powers of the several Australian Colonies in relation to existing Commercial Treaties between Great Britain and Foreign Countries.
- 2nd, To confer and advise upon the best means of obtaining for these Colonies freedom of action, so as to enable them, should they desire, to negotiate—
  - (a.) The admission into other countries, duty free, or upon such terms as may be agreed upon, the products of Australia and New Zealand; and
  - (b.) The free interchange of products between New Zealand and the Australian Colonies respectively.
- 3rd, To deliberate and report upon the expediency or otherwise of establishing a uniform Tariff for the Colonies.

It may also be advisable to consider any other other matters of a cognate nature, such as Immigration, the Ocean Steam Postal Service, Telegraph Extension, erection and maintenance of Lighthouses, Legal Comity, and the establishment of an Australian Court of Appeal.

In expressing a hope that uniformity of action may be observed by the Governments of the several Colonies in bringing the conference to a successful issue, I beg to acquaint you that a copy of this letter will be sent to the Governments of New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania, and South Australia.

I have, &c.,

T. B. STEPHENS.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, New Zealand.

#### No. 8.

The Hon. J. ROBERTSON to the Hon. E. W. STAFFORD.

(No. 4.)

SIR,—

Colonial Secretary's Office,

Sydney, New South Wales, 11th January, 1869.

In reference to the correspondence which has taken place with a view to the meeting in this city, in the month of March next, of delegates from the Australian Colonies and New Zealand, to consider the subjects of free trade, a uniform tariff and other cognate important subjects, I have now the honor to suggest that telegraphic communication with the Continent of Europe and Great Britain *via* India may form one of the important questions to which the conference may be prepared to devote its most earnest consideration.

I have, &c.,

JOHN ROBERTSON.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, New Zealand.

#### No. 9.

The Hon. J. V. BAGOT to the Hon. E. W. STAFFORD.

(No. 30-69.)

SIR,—

Chief Secretary's Office,

Adelaide, South Australia, 12th January, 1869.

I have the honor, by the desire of His Excellency Lieut.-Colonel Hamley, to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 29th October last, enclosing copy of a Resolution adopted by the New Zealand House of Representatives, "recommending that steps should be taken to ascertain the position of the Colony in relation to Commercial Treaties between Great Britain and Foreign Powers, and, especially, that authority should be sought to enable New Zealand, in conjunction with the Australian Colonies, to enter into negotiations with the United States for the free admission into that country of wool," and suggesting that a conference of delegates from the several Colonies should be held in Sydney about the 1st of February next, for the purpose of considering this, and the important question of the free interchange of products between the Colonies, the Ocean Postal Service, the establishment of a *Dépôt* at the Auckland Islands, and the erection of a Lighthouse on the Snares.

In reply, I am to inform you that this Government fully realize the importance of the questions raised by you, and will cheerfully join in the proposed conference. They would suggest the same should be held at some place connected with Adelaide by telegraph.

I have, &c.,

JOHN V. BAGOT.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, New Zealand.