

INTERCOLONIAL RECIPROCITY.

9 A.—No. 9.

No. 4.

The Hon. J. M. WILSON to the Hon. W. GISBORNE.

SIR,—

Colonial Secretary's Office, Tasmania, 19th January, 1872.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter under date the 20th December last, transmitting two copies of a Memorandum by the Colonial Treasurer of New Zealand on Lord Kimberley's Circular Despatch of the 13th July, 1871, which you are good enough to inform me fully explains the views of your Government on the subject of Intercolonial reciprocity.

The Government of Tasmania is much obliged by the opportunity of perusing Mr. Vogel's able and exhaustive Memorandum on the important Despatch under consideration, and is pleased to find New Zealand thus strenuously supporting the action on this head of the Melbourne Conferences of 1870 and 1871.

I have now the honor to forward you herewith four copies of a paper printed by order of the Parliament of this Colony in its last Session, containing Despatches and Correspondence on the subject of Intercolonial Free Trade, together with a Report and Minutes of the Proceedings of the Intercolonial Conference held in Melbourne in September last.

At page 21 of this paper will be found a Memorandum which I addressed to His Excellency Governor Du Cane, on the 11th September last, which embodies the views of the Government of Tasmania on the questions treated of in Lord Kimberley's Despatch.

You will perceive that my Memorandum coincides in its general tenor and in some particular points with the views expressed in Mr. Vogel's Minute; and the Government of New Zealand will, no doubt, observe with satisfaction that Governor Du Cane's Despatches to the Secretary of State strongly support the application to the Imperial authorities for the concession to Australasia of the privilege long since conferred upon British North America, of negotiating Intercolonial reciprocity conventions. The Memorandum and Resolutions adopted by the Melbourne Conference in September last also firmly maintain and assert the same principle on behalf of the Australasian Colonies.

I have, &c.,

J. M. WILSON.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, New Zealand.

Enclosures in No. 4.

EXTRACTS FROM PAPERS AND CORRESPONDENCE RELATING TO INTERCOLONIAL FREE TRADE BETWEEN TASMANIA AND THE OTHER AUSTRALASIAN COLONIES.

His Excellency Governor DU CANE to the Right Hon. the EARL GRANVILLE.

(No. 26, Executive).

MY LORD,—

Government House, Tasmania, 14th July, 1870.

In my Despatch of the 15th ultimo, I informed your Lordship that, at the suggestion of my Ministers, an Intercolonial Conference of Representatives of the Governments of New South Wales, Tasmania, South Australia, and Victoria was to be held in Melbourne on the 20th ultimo, having for its object (amongst other matters), "to consider and decide upon the advisability of establishing an Australian Customs Union on the basis of a common tariff and a free interchange of products and commodities."

2. In that Despatch I enclosed copies of the Commission under the Public Seal of the Colony appointing the Hon. Mr. Wilson, Colonial Secretary, and the Hon. Mr. Chapman, Colonial Treasurer, to be the representatives of my Government at the Conference, and of my instructions to those gentlemen as such representatives.

3. I have now the honor to acquaint your Lordship that the Conference has been held in Melbourne; and I append a printed copy of its report, minutes, and resolutions, supplemented by correspondence, returns, tabulated statements, and memoranda by individual representatives, bearing upon the various subjects considered during its sitting.

* * * * *

5. But your Lordship will observe that by far the most important resolution unanimously arrived at by the Conference is the one which asserts the rights of the Australian Colonies to "enter into arrangements with each other for the reciprocal admission of their respective products and manufactures duty free, on such terms as may be mutually agreed upon;" and which requires the repeal of so much of the "Act for the better Government of the Australian Colonies" as forbids the enactment by any Colonial Legislature of a tariff imposing differential duties. (Resolution 1, page 5.)

6. New Zealand and Queensland, though not represented at the Conference, have already promised their adhesion to the principles enunciated in the resolution, as will appear from Mr. Gisborne's letters to my Government, at pages 13 and 69; and from a Memorandum agreed to in January last by the Government of Queensland in concert with those of New South Wales and New Zealand, at page 47 of the Conference Papers herewith.

7. My Ministers have undertaken to prepare a draft measure for submission to the several Australian Governments to give effect to this resolution; and it seems next to a certainty that identical, if not simultaneous, legislative action in this direction will be taken by the four Colonies represented at the Conference, as well as by New Zealand and Queensland.

8. I have the assurance of my Ministers that the tone of the Conference on all questions affecting the present or prospective relations of the Mother Country and the Colonies was that of loyalty to the Crown, and anxiety for the maintenance of the Imperial connection.

* * * * *

10. Your Lordship will observe that the resolution adopted by the Conference does not seek to transfer to any single Colony or group of Colonies the Imperial prerogative of concluding treaty engagements with Foreign Powers. It only aims at the removal of the veto on Differential Duties as