

between the Colonies, and claims for their Legislatures and Governments the right to enter into arrangements in the nature of reciprocity conventions amongst themselves. A principle very similar to this has, I apprehend, been recognized by Her Majesty's Government, and acted upon, in the case of the British North American Provinces before their confederation in a single Dominion, as well as in the case of the legalized remissions of Customs duties on goods entering Victoria and New South Wales across the Murray Border.

11. * * * There is no doubt that the present system operates injuriously in many ways to the producing, industrial, and commercial interests of Tasmania; and the colonists, as I have gathered from opinions I have heard pretty generally expressed, find it difficult to to understand how imperial interests or Imperial obligations can be affected by Intercolonial arrangements that would allow the admission duty free into the Continental Colonies of Tasmanian timber, grain, hops, malt, beer, or preserves, in return for the similar admission into Tasmania of the wines, spirits, sugar, woollens, and other manufactures of the Continental Colonies. In thus forwarding that which will probably be the earliest information your Lordship will receive respecting the proceedings of the Conference, I feel it to be my further duty to invite beforehand your Lordship's favourable consideration towards the application for these powers which will for certain be embodied in an Act of the Legislature in the approaching Session.

13. I cannot regard otherwise than with feelings of satisfaction the fact that the idea of this Conference, which in all probability will lead to great and important results, and which undeniably has promoted a useful interchange of ideas between the official representatives of the principal Australian Colonies, emanated in the first instance from my Responsible Advisers, and was brought about by their energy and perseverance.

The Right Hon. the Earl Granville, K.G.

I have, &c.,
CHARLES DU CANE.

The Hon. J. M. WILSON to the Hon. J. ROBERTSON.

SIR,—

Tasmania, Colonial Secretary's Office, 17th August, 1870.

Herewith I have the honor to enclose you "A Bill to make better provision for the Interchange of Colonial Products and Manufactures between the Colonies of Australasia."

2. This Bill has been drafted for introduction into the Legislature of this Colony, with a view to giving effect to the resolution on the subject of Intercolonial Reciprocity unanimously passed by the late Conference in Melbourne; and it is now submitted to the Government of New South Wales, in accordance with the undertaking given to the Conference by the representatives of the Government of Tasmania.

3. It will be seen that the Bill is almost identical with the Intercolonial Free Trade Bill of the Parliament of Tasmania, which was disallowed by Her Majesty on the advice of the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos.

4. The present draft, however, differs from the disallowed Bill in this particular, that no schedule of dutiable articles is appended to it.

5. It was thought desirable to render the measure as simple as possible consistently with a clear appropriation to the Governor in Council of power to enter into such arrangements with the Governors of other Australasian Colonies, or with any of them, as would "allow of the reciprocal admission of their respective products and manufactures, duty free, on such terms as may be mutually agreed upon."

6. With this view, the only condition attached to the exercise of this power is one requiring that such arrangements shall be based upon absolute reciprocity.

7. For obvious fiscal considerations, spirits and tobacco are excepted from inclusion in any such reciprocal arrangement.

8. I entertain no doubt whatever that the Bill—of which I transmit you a copy—or a very similar measure, will be passed by the Parliament of Tasmania in its next Session, which will open on the 23rd instant; and I trust that your Government will take an early opportunity of inviting the Parliament of New Zealand to assent to a similar enactment.

9. There is the more occasion for promptitude in this matter inasmuch as the legislation now contemplated must be accomplished in the case of New South Wales and Victoria by an amendment of their Constitution Acts, which can only be effected by Bills passed by two-thirds majorities of both Houses of Parliament in either Colony, and reserved for the signification of Her Majesty's pleasure; while in the cases of South Australia, Queensland, New Zealand, and Tasmania, besides the delay incidental to a similar reservation, it may be necessary, if I am rightly informed, that an Act of the Imperial Parliament should be passed empowering Her Majesty to assent to legislation in excess of the powers conferred upon Colonial Legislatures by "The Act for the better Government of the Australian Colonies," (13th and 14th Victoria, cap. 59, section 27).

10. The Government of Tasmania has observed with extreme satisfaction that the Parliament of South Australia has already adopted a Petition to the Queen praying for the removal of all Imperial restrictions on the free interchange of products and manufactures between the Colonies.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, New South Wales.

[Similar to Victoria.]

I have, &c.,
JAMES MILNE WILSON.