

CORRESPONDENCE RELATIVE TO INTERCOLONIAL CONFERENCE.

No. 1.

The Hon. H. PARKES, to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY.

SIR,—

Sydney, 6th August, 1872.

I am directed by His Excellency Sir Hercules Robinson, to invite the Government of New Zealand to join in a Conference of the Australasian Colonies, for the consideration of the following subjects :—

- (1.) A scheme of Ocean Mail Services, which would meet the demands of all the Australian Colonies, and New Zealand.
- (2.) The policy of Intercolonial Free Trade, and the objections thereto advanced by the Secretary of State, in Despatches of 13th July, 1871, and 19th April, 1872.
- (3.) Telegraphic Communication, more especially in relation to submarine cables.

2. Each of these questions is of sufficient magnitude and consequence to engage the joint consideration of all the Colonies; and it may be doubted whether a settlement of them generally satisfactory, or even most advantageous to any one Colony, will ever be arrived at by isolated efforts. If it be contended that the Conferences of the last few years have not been followed by results so beneficial as were expected from them, still their comparative failure hitherto does not constitute a reason for not renewing our endeavours to promote, by united action, those measures of a federal character which can be dealt with most effectively by the Colonies in common. But it is believed that much good has been achieved by former Conferences, as they have tended to make the Colonies better acquainted with each other,—to create amongst them a sounder appreciation of their separate as well as their associated interests, and to determine the principles on which Intercolonial agreement is practicable. Perhaps it could hardly have been hoped that any agreement on the large subjects considered in past Conferences could receive the assent of all the Colonies, without the interruption and delay which arise from the difficulties of remote situation and opposing influences.

3. The larger of the questions to which I now invite your attention are clearly questions in which the Colonies are all equally interested; and they have now been subject to so much discussion, that it may be said that they are in a state more favourable for settlement than on any former occasion.

4. If you concur in the views of this Government, as to the desirability of a Conference at the present time, I would suggest that it be held in Sydney, about the middle of next month, and that it be attended by two representatives of New Zealand, and by two representatives of each of the Australian Colonies.

I have, &c.,

HENRY PARKES.

P.S.—Letters on the subject will be addressed to the Governments of Queensland, Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary of New Zealand, Wellington.

H.P.

No. 2.

The Hon. H. PARKES to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY.

SIR,—

Sydney, 23rd August, 1872.

I have received communications from the Governments of Victoria and Queensland, informing me that they cannot send representatives to the Conference proposed to be held in Sydney next month, owing to inconveniences arising at that time. I would, therefore, suggest that the Conference be postponed to a later period of the year. So soon as a date convenient to all can be definitely fixed, I will make a further communication to you on the subject.

I have, &c.,

HENRY PARKES.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary of New Zealand,
Wellington.

No. 3.

The Hon. H. PARKES to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY.

SIR,—

Sydney, 19th September, 1872.

Referring to my letter of 6th ultimo, inviting the Government of New Zealand to join in a Conference of the Australian Colonies and New Zealand, to be held in Sydney, for the consideration of several questions of Intercolonial interest therein specified, and to subsequent correspondence as to the most convenient time for holding such Conference, I now have the honour to name Monday, the 18th November, for the assembling of the representatives of the respective Governments.