

No. 71.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the Hon. the MINISTER for IMMIGRATION.

(No. 1897.)

7, Westminster Chambers, Victoria Street, Westminster, S.W.,

25th November, 1874.

SIR,—

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of 11th September, No. 269, informing me that the Government have appointed Mr. Walter Kennaway, of Christchurch, to be Secretary of my department, for a period of three years, at a salary of £800 a year, and that he will arrive in England about the same time as the Hon. Mr. Vogel, who will then arrange with me as to his (Mr. Kennaway's) position in the department, and the specific duties of his office.

2. My letter of August 7th, No. 1513, must have informed the Government within a few days after your letter under reply was written, that I had on the first of that month appointed Mr. Cashel Hoey to the office of my confidential Secretary, and that that gentleman had, before entering on its duties, resigned the offices of Emigration Commissioner and member of the Board of Advice of the Agent-General of Victoria, which he had for several years held.

3. I could not have conceived, when I appointed Mr. Cashel Hoey to this office, that the principle which the Government itself had so distinctly and emphatically laid down only a year before, as to the selection of my Secretary being left entirely in my hands, should have been, without notice or reference to me, apparently set aside in a manner which places me in a peculiarly painful and embarrassing position towards that gentleman. I have said "the principle" which the Government itself laid down as to the appointment of my confidential Secretary, an officer whose assistance has long since been admitted to be necessary to the proper discharge of my functions. To sustain this statement, I quote the following words from the letter of the Hon. the Colonial Secretary, of 2nd August, 1873, No. 94:—"The Government recognize the propriety of the selection of the person to fill an office of this nature being left entirely in the hands of the officer to whom he is to be attached, and the Government, therefore, make no objection to your choice of Mr. Buller." These words are extremely distinct and explicit; and I must confess I feel painfully surprised that, in the many communications which I have had with the Hon. the Premier by telegraph on this very subject, previous to Mr. Cashel Hoey's taking office, no intimation whatsoever was conveyed to me that the Government had any intention of interfering with the discretion so emphatically recognized as belonging to me with respect to this particular appointment.

4. On the 20th February last I telegraphed to the Government in the following terms:—"Will you sanction salary six hundred Secretary?" The allowance of £400 a year which had been made to Mr. Buller while acting as my Secretary, in addition to his half-pay, was, I felt, wholly inadequate to retain the services of a gentleman fitted in all respects to discharge the duties of an office requiring in its holder qualifications by no means common. I had ample evidence of Mr. Cashel Hoey's fitness from my being brought into frequent official relations with him during the year that he held a similar office, when the Right Hon. Mr. Childers and Sir James McCulloch were Agents-General for the Colony of Victoria, and especially during the period when, under circumstances peculiarly trying to him, he had for nearly six months virtual charge of the Victoria office after Mr. Childers returned to the Imperial Cabinet. I had reason to know that Mr. Childers reposed implicit confidence in him, and entertained a very high opinion of his official abilities. I was aware that the Government of Victoria had three several times within six months conveyed its thanks to him for his very honorable conduct under the difficult circumstances in which he was placed at the time to which I have referred, pending the appointment of a permanent Agent-General. I knew that when Lord Carnarvon was lately reconstituting the Colonial Museum Committee, such was his sense of the services rendered by Mr. Hoey to that project, that he expressly named him for the office of Secretary to it. It was my intention, if any adequate salary was sanctioned, to offer Mr. Cashel Hoey the appointment. I did not, however, receive any reply to my telegram on the subject until the 2nd of April, when the Hon. Mr. Vogel telegraphed, "Authorize temporary employment Secretary, subject one month's notice, at salary you consider reasonable." I felt it impossible to offer the appointment to Mr. Cashel Hoey, or to any gentleman possessing in any sufficient degree the qualifications essential to the office, clogged with a condition which in this country is only attached to the lower grades of official service. I telegraphed again on the 4th of May, and thinking that the mention of Mr. Hoey's name would sufficiently express the difficulty in which the Premier's previous telegram had placed me, I simply said, "Sanction asked Hoey's appointment Secretary, six hundred salary." In this telegram, it will be observed, there were two questions—first, with reference to the sanction of Mr. Cashel Hoey as the person to be appointed; second, as to the amount of salary. I felt, in addition to the reasons I have above given for mentioning his name, that, as Mr. Cashel Hoey would probably feel himself bound in honor to tender the resignation of the offices he held under another colony, I ought to remove beforehand any possible doubt as to his appointment not being confirmed by the Government. On the 8th of June I received the following reply to my telegram:—"Government will not sanction more than four hundred pounds for Private Secretary." That reply was far from satisfactory to me on the subject of salary; but I could only understand its silence on the principal question as again conveying the consent of the Government to the appointment of the person of my choice if I could engage his services at the salary stipulated. I informed Mr. Cashel Hoey accordingly. Next month Mr. Buller returned to the colony, and Mr. Cashel Hoey agreed to take the office on the terms upon which the Hon. Mr. Vogel's last telegram enabled me to offer it to him, without any condition as to a month's notice, but at the very inadequate salary of £400. He forthwith resigned his office in connection with the Colony of Victoria, and entered upon his duties as my Secretary on the 1st of August. No further communication from the colony reached me on the subject until the 29th of September, when, to my extreme astonishment, nearly five months after I had brought Mr. Hoey's name under the attention of the Government, I received the following telegram:—"Advise abstain from employing Hoey, Government sending you excellent officer act under you over department. He will arrive February, when Hoey entirely unnecessary." I am now finally informed in your letter under reply of the course which the Government have thought fit, for the advantage of the public service, to take in the matter.