

## No. 2.

Administrator A. C. ONSLOW, Western Australia, to the Right Hon. the Earl of DERBY, K.G.  
(Received 10th March, 1885.)

MY LORD,—

Government House, Perth, 29th January, 1885.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch of the 11th December last, transmitting a copy of the Australasian Federal Council Draft Bill, showing the amendments which Her Majesty's Government think desirable to be made therein.

2. In compliance with your Lordship's instructions, this Bill, with its amendments, has been carefully considered by this Government at a meeting of the Executive Council, at which all the members of the Council, with the exception of the Surveyor-General, who is absent on leave, were present.

3. On the 27th instant I forwarded to your Lordship a telegram, of which the following is a copy: "In reply to your despatch No. 89, amendments accepted. Despatch follows by mail."

4. I have now the honour to inform your Lordship that this Government has no observations to offer upon any portion of the Bill or the proposed amendments thereto, excepting only upon the point to which I beg respectfully to be allowed to allude.

5. This Government was not able clearly to reconcile the object of the omission of the third line in the 15th clause with the effect of the words which are proposed to be added to and which constitute the last two lines of the 20th clause.

6. It would appear, at first sight, that the object of the amendment in the 15th clause is to prevent the Federal Council from having unlimited jurisdiction and control over British ships sailing between Her Majesty's possessions in Australasia.

7. It would also appear that the intention of the words proposed to be added to the 20th clause is to bring within the jurisdiction of the Council all British ships other than Her Majesty's ships of war, whose last port of clearance or port of destination is in any such (*i.e.*, Australasian) possession or colony. In other words, it would appear that the 20th clause as amended confers the very power which it was the object of the amendment in the 15th clause to cut away.

8. The exemption in favour of Her Majesty's ships of war does not appear to be the essential portion of the amendment.

9. It is possible that the real object is to prevent British ships from coming within the operation of any Acts of the Federal Council, unless such Acts shall have previously received Her Majesty's assent in the manner provided by the Bill; which object without these amendments would not have been attained, as the 15th clause unamended would bring such vessels within the operation of the Federal Council's Acts before Her Majesty's assent had been obtained.

10. I fear it is the fault of this Government that we have not been able clearly to see the intentions of Her Majesty's Government in this matter, but I have thought it my duty to lay before your Lordship very respectfully the difficulty as it appears to us.

11. A slight verbal alteration (which I think a good one) has also been suggested to be made in the 31st (new) clause, *i.e.*, the use of the words "the Legislature of which" instead of the words "in which the Legislature." As the clause stands, the word "Legislature" might possibly be interpreted to mean the Federal Council when sitting in any particular colony; whilst the expression "the Legislature of which" can only be taken to mean the Legislature of that particular colony which is designated by the expression "This Act shall cease to be in operation in any colony."

The Right Hon. the Earl of Derby, K.G., &c.

I have, &c.,

ALEX. C. ONSLOW.

## No. 3.

Governor Sir A. MUSGRAVE, K.C.M.G., Queensland, to the Right Hon. the Earl of DERBY, K.G.  
(Telegraphic.)

(Received 12th March, 1885.)

12TH MARCH.—Proposition of Federal Council Bill carefully considered. Colonial Government do not agree to amendment clause 3; similar enactment contained in Constitution of colony; consider essentially necessary. Do not agree to amendment clause 5; carefully considered Convention; such modifications as may be necessary can await draft of Act colonial Legislature. Do not agree to amendment clause 15; quite sufficiently provided for (in) last subdivision as far as desirable at present. Do not agree to amendment second clause 26; very particularly fully discussed carefully considered Convention. Do not agree to amendment clause 31; consider it undesirable, very. Not quite certain whether I rightly understand proviso to amendment. Rest of answer unavoidably delayed; endeavouring to ascertain opinion New South Wales. Despatch follows.

## No. 4.

The AGENT-GENERAL for Victoria to the COLONIAL OFFICE.

8, Victoria Chambers, Victoria Street, Westminster, S.W.,  
16th March, 1885.

SIR,—

I have the honour to inform you that I have received a telegraphic despatch from the Hon. James Service, Chairman of the Committee of Premiers appointed by the Sydney Convention, with reference to the series of amendments proposed by the Earl of Derby in his despatch of the 11th of December last to the Governors of the Australian Colonies on the subject of the Enabling Bill for the establishment of a Federal Council of Australasia adopted by the Convention.

Mr. Service states that the Governments of the Colonies of Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, and Victoria all agree as follows: Clause 1. Proposed amendment is agreed with. Clause 3. The colonies are of opinion that the clause should not be struck out, but that a proviso should be added as follows: "Subject to provisions herein contained in respect to the operation of this Act." Clause 5. Proposed amendment is disagreed with. Clause 15. The colonies agree to