

consulting Her Majesty herself. This the Colonial Minister rightly refused to sanction, but he said at the same time that he hoped soon the Australian colonies would combine together and provide the cost to carry out such measures of annexation as Her Majesty might think it expedient to adopt. Then came the conference at Sydney, when this Bill was drafted. The intervening correspondence between the Colonial Minister and the Agents-General of the colonies illustrated exactly the kind of Imperial consultation and co-action which alone was practicable and effective. This subject, which was of Imperial concern and in the interest of the united Empire, was first discussed in the local Parliaments. The fact was communicated to the Home Government by the Queen's local representatives, the Governors. The subject was then discussed as between the Colonial Agents and the Secretary of State. Legislation emanated from a local convention, and it came to the Imperial Parliament for final approval. The Federal Council resulting from this complete discussion for dealing with matters of common Australasian interest was itself valuable as setting in practical contrast the only possible colonial federation with vague talk about Imperial federation. The Federal Council would probably lead to complete intercolonial federation, such as had been effected in Canada. This would strengthen the Empire at large, increase the power of the colonies for their own defence, and remove the jealousies and rivalries which impeded the development of their strength and prosperity. He hoped the first practical result would be the formation of an Australian squadron under Her Majesty's flag. It might be said that it could act only in local seas; but even that meant that there would be an Imperial navy in all parts of the world. We were now witnessing how local land forces would combine for any common Imperial necessity. He would reserve for Committee some comments on points of detail, and would only add that, as a whole, the measure seemed a matter of congratulation, happily coinciding with other circumstances at this moment in the promise of revised Imperial strength.

Viscount BURY said the Bill was a step in the right direction; but it was rather a leap in the dark until we knew what New South Wales would do in the matter. A federation without New South Wales and New Zealand would be like the play of Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark. As New South Wales and New Zealand were pre-eminently shipping colonies, and their mercantile marine might be affected by the action of the Federal Council, it was not only right that they should have the power of secession provided for, but that they should have the power of claiming indemnity if their interests were prejudicially affected by the action of the Council. He could not disguise the fact that opinion in the colonies had been unanimous when such important omissions had to be allowed for; and he could only hope that the operation of the Bill might be more satisfactory than he was able to anticipate it would be. He congratulated the noble earl at the head of the colonies upon the opportunity of making such a proposal, and he hoped that the Bill would be successful and useful.

The Earl of DERBY quoted the clause of the Bill referred to by the noble viscount, and remarked that it was as wide in its scope as the noble viscount appeared to desire.

The Bill was then read a second time.

No. 98.

The PREMIER, New Zealand, to the PREMIER, Victoria.

SIR,—
Premier's Office, Wellington, 30th April, 1885.
I have the honour to forward to you a memorandum, adopted by this Government, respecting the proposed Imperial Act for constituting an Australasian Federal Council, and to express the hope that the document may be promptly and favourably considered by your Government. A.-1., No. 46.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Premier of Victoria.

ROBERT STOUT.

[Similar letters to Sydney, Brisbane, Adelaide, Hobart, and Perth, 2nd May, 1885.]

No. 99.

The PREMIER, New South Wales, to the PREMIER, New Zealand.

SIR,—
Colonial Secretary's Office, Sydney, New South Wales, 14th May, 1885.
In acknowledging the receipt of your letter of the 2nd instant, I have the honour to express my thanks for the copies of a memorandum adopted by your Government respecting the proposed Imperial Act for constituting an Australasian Federal Council, therewith forwarded.

I have, &c.,

CRITCHETT WALKER,

The Hon. the Premier of New Zealand, Wellington.

Principal Under-Secretary.

No. 100.

The PREMIER, Tasmania, to the PREMIER, New Zealand.

SIR,—
Premier's Office, Hobart, 14th May, 1885.
I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 2nd instant, forwarding copies of a memorandum adopted by the Government of New Zealand, respecting the proposed Imperial Act for constituting an Australasian Federal Council. I have, &c.,
The Hon. the Premier, New Zealand, ADYE DOUGLAS.