

the proposed Federal Council Bill, by which the assent of the other Australasian Governments is invited to the proposal that a provision should be inserted in the Bill to the effect that no legislation of the Federal Council should be operative in any colony until adopted by the Legislature of that colony.

2. Although this Government is of opinion that any provision which would have the effect of lessening the authority of the proposed Federal Council or of facilitating its dissolution (such as the 31st clause proposed by Lord Derby) is open to grave objection; yet, recognizing that a Federal Union can only be secured by common agreement and mutual concessions, and attaching great importance to the adhesion of New Zealand to the proposed Council, I should have been willing, if it would have secured that object, to assent to the insertion of a clause making it optional on the part of the Legislatures (though I did not think that any colony but New Zealand would have taken advantage of the option) to make such a provision as suggested by you. I accordingly telegraphed to you on the 16th of May as follows:—"Federal Council Bill. Would it not meet your views if it were provided that any colony might enact in the Act adopting the Bill that the Acts of the Council should not be binding in that colony unless adopted by its Legislature? If this would secure the adhesion of New Zealand, I, for one, should be disposed to agree, but I have not had an opportunity of consulting any other colony, as your letter only received yesterday."

3. I found, however, that this suggested compromise, to which you expressed your willingness to agree, was not acceptable to the Government of Victoria, to which I first communicated it. Under these circumstances I did not feel at liberty to take any further steps, or to withdraw from the concerted action which has hitherto been taken by that colony and Queensland.

4. I do not think that the Federal Council Bill, as introduced into the Imperial Parliament, is fairly open to the objection that it interferes with the local autonomy of the several colonies on matters in which that autonomy is of any real importance.

The question was, as you are no doubt aware, very carefully considered in framing the Bill. For myself, I have always thought that the enactments of the Council, as the Bill is drawn, would virtually be equivalent to treaties made by the several colonies on matters concerning their relations with each other, the effect of the Bill being to make such treaties binding. And I entertain strong hopes that on further consideration, and after personal discussion with members of the other Australasian Governments, the Government of New Zealand will concur in this view.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. Robert Stout, Premier of New Zealand, Wellington.

S. W. GRIFFITH.

### No. 123.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the PREMIER.

SIR,—

7, Westminster Chambers, London, S.W., 15th June, 1885.

In continuation of my letter of the 3rd instant, No. 677, enclosing the letter I addressed No. 120. to the Colonial Office respecting Mr. Griffith's suggestion on the Federal Council Bill, I beg to state that I have now learnt, through the Agent-General for Victoria, that upon Mr. Griffith communicating his suggestion to Mr. Service the latter objected to the proposal, and Mr. Griffith withdrew it, telling you he could not depart from the concert between Queensland and Victoria.

I take this opportunity of pointing out, with reference to the Cabinet memorandum transmitted to me by the Hon. the Treasurer on the 25th April, that inasmuch as it was dated more than three A.—1, No. 46. weeks before your telegram of the 18th May directing me to try for the introduction of the sug- A.—4c, No. 103. gested clause, I now read the telegram as modifying the memorandum to the extent of Mr. Griffith's suggestion. I may have to point this out when I circulate the memorandum, as my attention has already been called to the apparent contradiction between the memorandum and my letter to the Colonial Office of the 2nd instant. The letter has just been published as a parlia- No. 120. mentary paper, and I transmit a copy herewith.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

F. D. BELL.

### No. 123A.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the PREMIER.

SIR,—

7, Westminster Chambers, London, S.W., 16th June, 1885.

It may perhaps be convenient for reference in your office that I should transmit to you herewith copy of a letter I have addressed to the Hon. the Colonial Treasurer, in answer to one from him dated the 25th April, on the subject of the Federal Council Bill.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

F. D. BELL.

### Enclosure.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the Hon. the COLONIAL TREASURER.

SIR,—

7, Westminster Chambers, London, S.W., 16th June, 1885.

I beg to acknowledge receipt of the Hon. Treasurer's letter of the 25th April last, transmitting a number of copies of a Cabinet memorandum on the subject of the Federal Council Bill, A.—1, No. 46. and directing me to circulate it among the members of both Houses of the Imperial Parliament and the Press; and also to send a copy of it to the Secretary of State. I immediately communicated a copy of the memorandum to the Colonial Office, and should have circulated it among the members