

No. 3

The AGENT-GENERAL to the PREMIER.

SIR,—

7, Westminster Chambers, London, S.W., 22nd October, 1885.

I had the honour to receive to-day your telegram informing me, with reference to my letter of the 8th September, No. 394, that your Government had announced in the House of Representatives that they were of opinion the late Ministers had been entitled to renew my appointment as Agent-General, and that a special ratification by Parliament was not necessary; also that particulars on the subject had been sent to me by the then preceding (October) mail.

It is now my duty to wait for the receipt of your letter. I trust I may be permitted, however, to express, in the meantime, a hope that the despatch of that letter by you will not have interposed to prevent your laying mine of the 8th September before the House.

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

F. D. BELL.

No. 4.

The PREMIER to the AGENT-GENERAL.

TRY arrange New Zealand may have option annexing or confederating Samoa under Bill last year. Our instructions your actions wired colonial newspapers. Consider this undesirable. Endeavour arrange keep strictly confidential matters under negotiation.

ROBERT STOUT,

22nd October, 1884.

No. 5.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the PREMIER.

SIR,—

7, Westminster Chambers, London, S.W., 22nd October, 1884.

It was with no small concern that I learnt, from your telegram received this morning, that not only my own acts, but even your instructions to me, had been made the subject of Press telegrams in the colonial newspapers.

Certainly there never has been the slightest authority or foundation for it by me; and I have a perfect confidence that no one among my officers has disclosed a word of what he has learnt in this office. I can only conjecture that, in some unguarded way, the fact of my having received orders of some kind from you had got abroad. It was, of course, necessary for me to make my colleagues, the other Agents-General, acquainted with the general tenor of your instructions to me about the Pacific question: indeed, it has all along been a point of honour among ourselves to have no concealment, as was manifestly necessary, because no concert whatever would have been possible on any other condition: and I know that the Press reporters were all the more eager to get an inkling of what I had been ordered to do, because they had themselves been busy with spurious messages of a supposed discord between the Agents-General, and especially of a want of harmony between Mr. Murray-Smith and myself.

This inquisitiveness of the gentlemen connected with the Press is, of course, very difficult to defeat; and most of the other Governments have been greatly annoyed by the appearance of telegrams similar to those to which you refer, while every Agent-General has had special reasons to be more than ever guarded with the reporters. But long experience on the subject has only shown me how certain it is, with a few of them, though certainly not with all, that, where information is denied to them, they will invent it.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

F. D. BELL.

No. 6.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the PREMIER.

SIR,—

7, Westminster Chambers, London, S.W., 29th November, 1884.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 29th September, enclosing an extract from *Hansard* relating to my continuance in the office of Agent-General.

While tendering to you my respectful thanks for your letter, I am not able to concur in the view taken by your Government of Major Atkinson's proposal to me of the 24th May; and I cannot but feel that all that has passed in the House since that time leaves me personally in a position very unfortunate for me, and one which I would not have accepted for a moment if I had known what it would be.

I am so unwilling, however, to refer again to personal feelings, which can be of no consequence to the colony, that the most respectful course for me to pursue is to say nothing more on the subject.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

F. D. BELL.

No. 7.

The PREMIER to the AGENT-GENERAL.

SIR,—

Government Offices, Wellington, 6th December, 1884.

I have the honour to inform you that your letter No. 443, of the 10th October, was duly received, and that the Premier at once complied with the request made therein by forwarding copy of the letter to Major Atkinson.

I have, &c.,

Sir F. Dillon Bell, K.C.M.G.,

P. A. BUCKLEY,

Agent-General for New Zealand, London.

In the absence of the Premier.