

No. 47.

(No. 68.)

MY LORD,—

Government House, Wellington, 12th May, 1885.

In accordance with the addition to No. 407 of the Colonial Regulations, I have the honour to report to your Lordship that I have recently commuted the sentence of death passed on one Robert Prendergast for the murder of his wife.

2. The convict was, no doubt, properly convicted; but the jury accompanied their verdict with a recommendation to mercy on the ground of the prisoner's insanity. It was clearly proved at the trial that the prisoner was at the time he committed the crime labouring under delusions, although not such as to render him legally irresponsible for his acts. Indeed, since his conviction he was obliged to be transferred to the lunatic asylum.

After taking the opinion of my Ministers, I decided that the sentence of death should be commuted to one of penal servitude for life.

I have, &c.,

WM. F. DRUMMOND JERVOIS.

The Right Hon. the Earl of Derby.

No. 48.

(No. 69.)

MY LORD,—

Government House, Wellington, 12th May, 1885.

I have the honour herewith to transmit a copy of a memorandum from the Premier, Mr. Stout, with reference to the state of affairs in the Friendly Islands.

2. As your Lordship will perceive, my Ministers represent that it is desirable that, on account of the advanced age of the present King, and the recent death of the Prince who was his heir, no time should be lost in agreeing with other Powers as to who should succeed to the crown.

3. I am communicating with the Acting High Commissioner of the Western Pacific, who will, no doubt, report to your Lordship on the subject.

I have, &c.,

WM. F. DRUMMOND JERVOIS.

The Right Hon. the Earl of Derby.

Enclosure.

MEMORANDUM for His EXCELLENCY.

MINISTERS present their respectful compliments to the Governor, and beg to draw His Excellency's attention to the state of affairs in the Friendly Islands, with a view to representations being made to the Colonial Office, so as to induce the Imperial Government to consider the matter.

2. The King of Tonga is nearly ninety years old, and Prince George, who was the probable successor to the crown, has died.

3. From intelligence gathered by Sir Julius Vogel during a conversation at Dunedin with the British Consul for many years at Tonga, and from information derived from other sources, Ministers believe that there is imminent danger of great disturbances taking place on the death of the aged King.

4. Ministers would respectfully venture to suggest that it is expedient, in the interests of the Islands and of all persons concerned, that Her Majesty's Government should arrange in advance with the Governments of Germany and the United States the nature of the Government to be established on the death of the present King. It would, indeed, as Ministers believe, avoid difficulties if the three Governments named were at once to determine who they would recognize as the King's successor.

5. Ministers have received various communications from Tonga; but, as party feeling runs high there, and as probably some of the Imperial officers may be reporting on the subject to their Government, it has not been thought desirable to advise His Excellency to forward any of these communications to the Colonial Office.

Wellington, 4th May, 1885.

ROBERT STOUT.