

9. I shall be glad to place my services at the disposal of your Excellency and of your Government in the hope of being able to assist in arriving at a practical result to a question of so much importance to the colonies and to the nation, and I shall be glad to enter into any arrangement to meet your Excellency, or any members of your Government, at some central place, at such time as may be most convenient, and your Excellency may be able to arrange, and to give any information in my power.

10. I have had the honour to address similar communications to their Excellencies the Governors of New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia, and Tasmania.

I have, &c.,

G. TRYON,

Rear Admiral and Commander-in-Chief.

His Excellency General Sir W. F. D. Jervois, G.C.M.G., C.B.

No. 27.

MINISTERS to the GOVERNOR.

(Memorandum for His Excellency the Governor.)

MINISTERS have the honour to acknowledge His Excellency's memorandum of the 1st March, No. 26, in which the Governor encloses the copy of a memorandum from Admiral Tryon, stating what passed at a meeting held at Government House on the 20th January. His Excellency asks Ministers to give their opinion as to whether the Admiral has correctly described the proceedings. The Governor also calls the attention of his Advisers to the wish expressed by the Secretary of State, that a meeting, consisting of so many of the Governors as are able to attend, and of the Premiers of the various colonies, should take place, to consider, in conjunction with Admiral Tryon, the question of naval defence. His Excellency further states that it is proposed the meeting should take place about the end of March.

1. Ministers, in reply, have to say that they concur with His Excellency in considering that the Admiral gives a fair account of the proceedings at the meeting in question.

2. Ministers will separately address His Excellency on the subject of naval defence generally, and the duties of the colony in relation thereto.

3. Ministers will confine themselves in the present memorandum to dealing with the question of the proposed conference.

4. They consider so much deference is due to the wish expressed by one of Her Majesty's principal Secretaries of State that their inclination is to take part in the meeting, though they think exception might be taken to the nature of its proposed composition. They feel bound to state, without deeply entering into the question, that, if conferences of the kind became a recognized principle, they would be liable to affect the constitutional privileges and autonomies of the colonies, by creating a new body to interpose between the Imperial and Colonial Governments. They think, however, that they sufficiently meet the objection by expressing the opinion that such a conference should not be regarded as a precedent.

5. Ministers, therefore, in the absence of an opportunity of consulting Parliament, would take part in the conference, supposing always that at least three of the other first-class colonies (of which Victoria and New South Wales must be two) were to be represented. It is impossible, however, that any Minister can attend about the end of this month, as, on account of the early meeting of Parliament, no Minister could be absent from the colony.

6. As, therefore, a meeting of Parliament will take place before New Zealand can assist at the conference, Ministers must qualify their willingness to attend it by making their consent dependent on Parliament not interposing an objection.

7. Ministers deem it right to add that if they were able to send a representative to the proposed Conference before Parliament meets, he would be in a position to do little more than listen to the views expressed. The question involved is of such large and long-reaching importance that His Excellency's Advisers would not feel themselves at liberty, in the absence of parliamentary authority, to pledge the colony either to a specific course or to definitely-decided views.

JULIUS VOGEL,

(In absence of Premier.)

Wellington, 10th March, 1886.

No. 28.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the PREMIER.

SIR,—

7, Westminster Chambers, London, S.W., 25th March, 1886.

I transmit to you herewith the *Times* report of a question put in the House of Commons on the 22nd instant by Mr. Baden-Powell on the subject of naval defence in the Australasian Colonies, and of Mr. Osborne Morgan's reply.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

F. D. BELL.

Enclosure.

[Extract from the *Times*, Tuesday, 23rd March, 1886.]

THE COLONIAL AND IMPERIAL NAVAL FORCES.—House of Commons, Monday, 22nd March.

MR. BADEN-POWELL asked the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, whether the Governments of any of our greater colonies had expressed willingness to consider some scheme for the amalgama-