

The discussion at that meeting led to the idea that it might be possible to continue the existing Exhibition almost in its present shape by resorting to the method of guarantee. It is supposed that there will be a surplus of nearly £50,000 from the present Exhibition, which would form an initial fund of perhaps adequate amount. A further meeting took place yesterday, when a communication was made to us from His Royal Highness to the effect that if there was a prospect of the movement being carried out by means of a guarantee he would willingly place himself at its head, and communicate to the respective Governments his view of the best steps to take now. A long discussion ensued, and I hope by the next mail to be able to give you more complete information than I am to-day.

The Hon. the Colonial Treasurer, Wellington.

I have, &c.,
F. D. BELL.

No. 3.

The PREMIER, New South Wales, to the PREMIER.

SIR,—

Treasury, New South Wales, Sydney, 5th August, 1886.

I have the honour to forward you a copy of a letter received from the Agent-General of this colony enclosing a copy of a communication addressed to him on the subject of the proposed establishment at the close of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition of a Colonial Museum.

Assuming that similar representations have been made to you on this subject, I shall be glad if you will, at as early a date as may be convenient, favour me with an intimation of the course which your Government intends to pursue with regard to it.

I have, &c.,
(No signature)
PREMIER.

The Hon. the Premier, New Zealand.

[Note.—Enclosure same as in No. 1.]

No. 4.

The PREMIER to the PREMIER, New South Wales.

SIR,—

6th September, 1886.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 5th ultimo asking for an intimation of the course this Government intends to pursue with regard to the proposed establishment of a Colonial Museum in London at the close of the present Indian and Colonial Exhibition.

I have now the honour to inform you that, after giving the matter the utmost consideration, this Government have reluctantly arrived at the conclusion that at present it is not in its power to assist in the establishment of such a museum.

The Hon. the Premier, Sydney, New South Wales.

I have, &c.,
ROBERT STOUT.

No. 5.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the COLONIAL TREASURER.

SIR,—

7, Westminster Chambers, London, S.W., 27th July, 1886.

In continuation of my letter of the 15th instant, No. 890, I transmit herewith the minutes of what took place at the second meeting there mentioned, together with a circular memorandum by the Prince of Wales, as Executive President of the Royal Commission, bringing before the respective Colonial Governments the views of His Royal Highness respecting the continuance of the present Colonial and Indian Exhibition, and the conditions on which he would himself be willing to retain the executive presidency.

These conditions are, I believe, what the members of the Royal Commission and others who were present at the meetings had always understood the Prince considered necessary, with one exception—namely, that of an annual grant by the respective colonies. The proposal discussed at the second meeting was for a continuance of the Exhibition by means of a renewal of the existing guarantee fund, and the opinion which then seemed to preponderate was certainly adverse to an annual grant by the colonies in addition to the guarantee. When, therefore, His Royal Highness's memorandum was received by the Commissioners, this point seemed to me so important that I suggested to Sir Phillip Owen to have another meeting, as it was obviously undesirable for any proposal to come from the Prince which was not likely to be accepted by the colonial Governments; but he replied that the condition of an annual grant could not be altered.

The whole question is now placed before the Governments for their decision, and the Prince asks that this decision may be communicated to him by telegram before the close of the present Exhibition in October; but I hardly see how this can be done if an annual grant remains one of the conditions, as the Australasian Parliaments may not be in session.

The Hon. the Colonial Treasurer, Wellington.

I have, &c.,
F. D. BELL.

No. 6.

The CHIEF SECRETARY, Queensland, to the PREMIER.

The Hon. Premier, Wellington, New Zealand.

WHAT action, if any, do you propose to take with respect to the suggestion to continue the Indian and Colonial Exhibition. We are prepared to let our exhibits remain and supplement them from time to time, and perhaps also to continue guarantee, but are not disposed to make annual contribution to expenses.

Brisbane 13th September, 1886.

CHIEF SECRETARY.