

No. 41.

(No. 80.)

MY LORD,—

Government House, Wellington, 23rd August, 1886.

With reference to your Lordship's Despatch No. 42, dated the 25th June last, transmitting a translation of a petition to the Queen on behalf of the Arawa chiefs, praying that Her Majesty would present a bell to their church, I have the honour to inform your Lordship that my Ministers are of opinion that, if the request of the chiefs were complied with, applications of a similar nature would in all probability follow from every Maori tribe in the colony, and that, under the circumstances, it is not expedient that any further notice should be taken of the petition.

I may add that I entirely concur in the views expressed by my Ministers, and that, pending the receipt of further instructions, I have refrained from making any communication to the Arawa chiefs on the subject. I would respectfully suggest that authority be given me to inform them that their petition has been received, but that the Secretary of State is unable to submit the application for Her Majesty's consideration.

I have, &c.,

W. F. DRUMMOND JERVOIS.

The Right Hon. the Earl Granville, K.G.

No. 42.

(No. 82.)

MY LORD,—

Government House, Wellington, 9th September, 1886.

I have the honour to report that I have recently commuted the sentence of death passed on one William Rowland for the murder of a man named Edward Neave.

The prisoner was twice tried, and on the first occasion the jury disagreed, and were discharged without giving a verdict. On the second trial evidence given by the murdered man, which had previously been withheld, was produced, and the question was reserved for the Court of Appeal whether that evidence, considering the circumstances under which it was taken, was properly admissible. The Court of Appeal decided that it was.

The jury who found Rowland guilty, however, accompanied their verdict with a recommendation to mercy. The Chief Justice, who tried the case, states that the recommendation was based on the belief that on the morning when the deed was committed there had been some angry disputation between the convict and Neave. His Honour also reports that he considers that there was ground for that belief.

There is no doubt in my mind that Rowland was properly convicted of the crime with which he was charged, but the majority of my Ministers, six out of eight, are very decidedly of opinion that the extreme penalty of the law should not be enforced, and on the whole I have deemed it expedient to commute the sentence to penal servitude for life.

I have, &c.,

W. F. DRUMMOND JERVOIS.

The Right Hon. the Earl Granville, K.G.

No. 43.

(No. 83.)

MY LORD,—

Government House, Wellington, 9th September, 1886.

I have the honour to forward herewith a letter from the Acting Speaker of the Legislative Council, covering a protest by certain members of the Legislative Council against a Bill intituled "The Property-tax Act, 1886," which was passed by both Houses of the General Assembly during the recent session. I also forward a memorandum by the Premier, covering a memorandum by the Property-tax Commissioner explaining the circumstances which led to the provision in the Act against which protest is made.

I have, &c.,

W. F. DRUMMOND JERVOIS.

The Right Hon. the Earl Granville, K.G.