

would be so strong that it would bear down all opposition. I replied that Ministers were holding out to me, as an alternative, an emasculated Upper House or none at all; but that I was bound to uphold, as far as I could, the Constitution of the country. I said I was making them an offer not much less than what they desired, and repeated that an addition of nine would give them a sufficient number to place their policy properly before the Council. I added that the question of bringing the two Houses into harmony, which I believed would be the practical upshot if I granted the application of Ministers, could not arise until the Chambers declined to give effect to the result of an appeal to the country, and that had not yet happened.

8. Mr. Ballance undertook to communicate my decision to the Cabinet, and in the afternoon he informed me that he had done so; that they considered an addition of nine to the Legislative Council worse than useless, and that they cannot therefore accept it; that they will reintroduce into Parliament the measures that were not passed last session, and if they are not carried they will appeal to the country.

9. Your Lordship will observe that my especial difficulty has been this: that I have not had at my disposal any means of ascertaining the exact amount of nominations that could have been given without altering the balance of parties in the Upper House, and that I had therefore no alternative but to take up the position of, and act on the information supplied me by, my predecessor. I felt this so much that I said to Mr. Ballance that, if he cordially concurred in the step, I would send for the leader of the Opposition in the Council and ask him to tell me frankly if the number required by Ministers would imperil his majority. Mr. Ballance replied that it would make a precedent of an unusual character (which I admitted, remarking that the occasion was an unusual one), and said that the Opposition leader would be bound to give no reply that would please the Government.

10. I have thus, my Lord, done my best to perform my duty adequately in the very difficult position in which I have been placed. I have looked at the matter from a constitutional point of view. Within a fortnight of the date of my taking the oath to preserve the Constitution of the colony I have been called upon to increase, for party purposes, the Upper House to a point which might have given the Government a preponderance in it which they would not otherwise possess before an appeal has been made to the country. If I had given way, it might have tided over the difficulty for the time, but it would have established a precedent, which would most certainly have been followed by the Opposition whenever its turn of power arrives.

The policy of the Government may be to bring the Legislative Council into disrepute, with a view to its abolition, or it may be only intended to frighten the Council into passing the measures of the Government. I do not believe that the Legislative Council will be abolished easily; but, if abolition does come, I submit to your Lordship that the ending of the Chamber would be preferable to its retention in a condition so manipulated as to possess merely a semblance of independence.

I have, &c.,

The Right Hon. Lord Knutsford, &c.

GLASGOW.

No. 4.

(No. 31A.)

MY LORD,—

Government House, Wellington, 8th July, 1892.

I have the honour to forward a memorandum from the Premier submitting a copy of a letter from Captain Daveney, of the Imperial Pensions Office, Auckland, suggesting for your Lordship's consideration that a concession recently granted to soldiers of Her Majesty's army who served in the Crimean and Indian Mutiny campaigns may be extended to soldiers who served in the Maori war.

I have, &c.,

The Right Hon. Lord Knutsford, &c.

GLASGOW.