

1893.
NEW ZEALAND.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS.

(CORRESPONDENCE RELATING THERETO.)

[In continuation of A.—7, 1892.]

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

No. 1.

(No. 31.)

MY LORD,—

Wellington, New Zealand, 22nd June, 1892.

I have the honour to inform you that, since my arrival in the colony on the 7th instant, I have had several interviews with Mr. Ballance, the Premier, on the subject of the appointment of the increase of the Legislative Council, and the request of the Government that twelve new nominations to that Chamber be approved of; and yesterday morning I informed him that I felt myself unable to appoint more than nine.

2. The gist of his communications to me was as follows: that there are certain projects which the Government wish to pass into law, the legislation as to land in particular; and that the Government find themselves in an unbearable position in the Legislative Council. In the House of Representatives they have a good working majority; but in the Legislative Council the Attorney-General, who is the only Minister in that Chamber, finds himself with the support of only, at the outside, four or five members, none of whom possess any debating-power whatever. "It is plain," said Mr. Ballance, "that no Government can carry on the business of the House satisfactorily when in one Chamber they exist only on sufferance." He also said, later on, that it was not the wish of the Government to swamp the Legislative Council, but only to have a certain amount of debating-power, of which at present they have none. He remarked that if the Legislative Council throws out the Bills he is going to reintroduce this session the consequences may be very serious, and stated that he thought Lord Onslow would have granted twelve. But I pointed out that in the confidential despatch which Lord Onslow had left for me, and which he showed to Mr. Ballance before leaving, he had not indicated that he would grant more than eight.

3. In reply, I stated that I was glad to learn that Ministers did not contemplate swamping the Legislative Council; that I was anxious to do what I could to meet my Ministers' views, but that I must have some time to reflect.

4. At the interview which I had with Mr. Ballance yesterday morning, at which the Attorney-General was also present, I said that I had carefully weighed the arguments of the Premier in favour of appointing twelve members; that I admitted that appointments should be made; but that, after considering the reasons given by the late Governor against agreeing to the proposal made to him just before he left the colony, which was identical with the one made to me, I found myself in accord with Lord Onslow, and that I was unable to agree to more than eight appointments, though as soon as a resignation, which had been announced by telegraph, became an accomplished fact I would agree to fill up this vacancy, making in all nine appointments.

1—A. 7.