

13. I do not think it is seriously maintained, in the face of the constant practice in England for defeated Ministries to advise Her Majesty to create Peers, that there has been anything unconstitutional in my action; but, so far as I can gather, there is a strong feeling in the colony that the practice which obtains in England of making Ministerial appointments before vacating office is not one which New Zealand Ministers should be encouraged to follow.

14. If I have interpreted that feeling aright, public opinion will be strong enough to prevent its recurrence.

15. In colonies possessed of such democratic institutions as manhood suffrage and triennial Parliaments, in addition to a numerous and universally-read Press, public opinion is not slow to assert itself, or to execute summary punishment on the Ministry or party which has acted contrary to its wishes.

16. The unexpected support which the new Ministers had received in the recent short session of Parliament, and the discontent of many of the supporters of the late Government, is a sufficient intimation to the leaders of the party lately in power of the state of public opinion on this matter, and ought to prevent any serious evil to the colony arising out of the event, considered in the light of a precedent; while, at the same time, the resignation of Ministers because their advice has not been accepted has been avoided—a step which, in my opinion, only the most imperative necessity can justify.

17. I need hardly add that any expression of opinion from your Lordship will greatly aid me in the course which I should adopt in future, and will be valued in the colony as an indication of the attitude which Her Majesty's Government desire the representative of the Queen to assume towards his Advisers and towards the people of these large and growing communities, who are in full possession of the powers of self-government, and perfectly able to control and direct those to whom they intrust the Government.

The Right Hon. the Lord Knutsford, G.C.M.G., &c.

I have, &c.,

ONSLow.

Enclosure in No. 3.

To His Excellency the Earl of ONSLOW, Governor of New Zealand.

MAY it please your Excellency,—

We, the undersigned members of the House of Representatives of New Zealand, desire respectively to bring under your Excellency's notice the fact that statements have appeared in the public prints to the effect that Ministers have advised your Excellency to call a number of gentlemen to the Legislative Council prior to the opening of Parliament.

As representatives of the people of New Zealand, we beg to state,—

1. That your Excellency's present Advisers are now resigning office.
2. That the people of the colony are, without doubt, opposed to any more immediate appointments to the Legislative Council, especially as at present constituted.
3. That such appointments will, if made, be in direct opposition to an understanding arrived at between your Excellency's Ministers and the House of Representatives, and also to the report of a Committee adopted by the Legislative Council.

We are, &c.,

J. M. SHERA,

W. KELLY,

R. M. HOUSTON,

E. METCALF SMITH,

A. J. CADMAN,

H. S. FISH, Jun.,

And 35 others.

No. 4.

The Earl of ONSLOW to Lord KNUTSFORD.

(Received 20th March, 1891.)

MY LORD,—

Wellington, 3rd February, 1891.

With reference to my despatch of this date (No. 3), and to my despatch of the 24th January (No. 2), I think your Lordship should be informed that, at the time (16th December) when I gave an undertaking to Sir Harry Atkinson to accept his advice to call six instead of eleven gentlemen to the Legislative Council, though I was aware that the Premier's health would not permit him to continue in office, and his resignation was a necessity, he handed me a card of the new Parliament, which he said the Government had carefully considered, and according to which he claimed for his party thirty-five supporters against thirty-two of his opponents, while six votes, some of which he hoped to secure, were doubtful.

Had these prognostications—the reliability of which I had no means of testing—been realised, he would doubtless, upon his resignation, have advised me to send for one of his colleagues or prominent supporters, and the continuity of the Government need not have been broken.

The Right Hon. the Lord Knutsford, G.C.M.G., &c.

I have, &c.,

ONSLow.

No. 5.

Lord KNUTSFORD to the Earl of ONSLOW.

MY LORD,—

Downing Street, 11th April, 1891.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your despatches (Nos. 1 and 3) reporting upon matters connected with the change of Ministry in New Zealand in January.