

Governor Sir JOHN YOUNG to the SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES.

(No. 37.)

MY LORD DUKE,—

Government House, 21st May, 1861.

I have the honour to enclose a copy of the Proclamation proroguing the Parliament of this colony on the 11th instant.

It was necessary to close the session in consequence of the expiration of the period to which the first nominations to the Legislative Council were limited.

Several useful enactments were made, the estimates thoroughly discussed, and the Appropriation Act passed in due form, so that the current expenditure up to the 31st December next will proceed under full legislative sanction, which has not been the case for two or three years past.

The Land Bills, I am sorry to say, were not passed, and this difficult and embarrassing question still remains open. At one time there was every prospect of an agreement on all points between the two Houses, and the leading and most moderate men in both gave me the most satisfactory assurances. But, unfortunately, during the last week of the session a different spirit came over the proceedings. The Legislative Assembly rejected by large majorities the amendments of the Legislative Council, which the Legislative Council again insisted, by large majorities, on maintaining.

The Ministers said they had submitted to "indignities" in attempting to pass these Bills, and that their honour was so nearly concerned that additional nominations to the Legislative Council must be made so as to insure the passing of the Bills.

The choice, if choice it can be called, placed before me on the morning of Friday, the 10th instant, was either to accept the advice of the Ministers, or to break with them, backed as they are by six-sevenths of the Legislative Assembly, and by the people, in a cry which was all-powerful on the hustings at the general election no later than last December.

It was admitted on all hands to be impossible to form any other Ministry. The Legislative Council was to expire, in terms of the Constitution, on the following Monday.

No precedent could be founded on the proceedings, as similar circumstances can never recur in the history of the colony, and it seemed desirable to make an effort to end the long, harassing, and injurious agitation on the land question before the question of the new nominations to the Legislative Council came upon the carpet.

Accordingly, after some hesitation, and after receiving the assurance that the step taken should not prejudice the reconstruction of the Legislative Council—that all the gentlemen to be specially appointed for the single night the Council had to last should be made clearly to understand that they would have no claim or right thereby to future reappointments—I consented to the course pressed on me by the Ministers.

The nominations were made accordingly; but the opposite party defeated the Ministerial intentions by resigning. The President's resignation in particular had the effect of preventing a House being formed. There was "no House," so the new members were not sworn in; and the adjournment which ensued, as a matter of course, was nominally to the following Tuesday, but it really closed the session, for it went over to a period when, by the effluxion of time, the Legislative Council—the old as well as the new nominations—had ceased to have effect.

Matters now stand thus: The Parliament is prorogued. Whether it will be called together to pass the Land Bill one month or three months hence is not yet decided.

The expenditure and current business are proceeding in due form, and with all requisite sanctions.

The land question remains unsettled, which is to be deplored, as the state of conflict and uncertainty is deeply hurtful in many ways; but the public mind is quiet.

The people are satisfied that all that could be done, to pass the Bills on which their hearts are set has been done by Ministers.

No meetings have been called. The tone of the Press is moderate; and measures for the reconstruction of the Legislative Council have been taken on a basis which accords with your Grace's recommendations.

These measures are not sufficiently advanced for me to make a positive statement as to the result at the present moment; but I think I may say there appears to me to be ground for hoping that I shall be enabled to make your Grace a satisfactory announcement on this anxious subject by the next mail.

I have, &c.,

JOHN YOUNG.

Governor Sir JOHN YOUNG to the SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES.

(No. 51.)

MY LORD DUKE,—

Government House, Sydney, 19th July, 1861.

At Sir William Burton's request, I have the honour to send herewith a statement of his services, and of the circumstances which appeared to him to call for his resignation of the office of President of the Legislative Council of New South Wales.

This document is a narrative, in some sort an impeachment, of the whole policy and proceedings of the existing Ministry, who, on their part, are prepared to combat Sir William Burton's position.

Your Grace will probably be inclined to view what may be urged on the one and on the other side as matter rather for constitutional discussion between those who take opposite sides in the colony than for Imperial cognisance. If, however, you should think proper to institute a minute review of these affairs, and so judge between the parties, I shall take the earliest possible opportunity, on being so instructed, of furnishing you with the necessary materials, which, indeed, comprise the Bills, reports, parliamentary debates, and proceedings of more than one session.