

In the event of any men having been engaged already, please, also, submit a list of their names, showing terms of engagement, and state by whose authority the engagements have been made.

Will you be good enough to have this matter attended to at once, if possible.

Public Works Department,  
Wellington, 25th May, 1892.

H. J. H. Blow,  
Under-Secretary for Public Works.

*In Cabinet.*

12th April, 1892.

A CIRCULAR to be sent to departments to the effect that the services of any artisan or labourer required shall only be procured through the Labour Bureau.

ALEX. WILLIS,  
Secretary to the Cabinet.

DEAR MAJOR STEWARD,—

Assembly Buildings, 27th May, 1892.

I have now received an instruction from the Minister for Public Works to notify to him any vacancies which may occur in the department, as, estimates being now under control of Government, all appointments must be made by the Minister in charge.

Yours, &c.,  
GEORGE FRIEND.

DEAR MR. FRIEND,—

Ashburton, 30th May, 1892.

Your notes of 26th and 27th, informing me of the interference of the Minister for Public Works in matters hitherto under the control of yourself and the Serjeant-at-Arms, to hand, and I have to thank you for promptly drawing my attention to the matter.

Herewith I send you a letter for the Premier, and one for the Minister for Public Works, which you will please have copied (for reference), and then forward.

Yours, &c.,  
W. J. STEWARD.

MEMO.—In forwarding the letter to the Premier, please enclose therewith—(1) Copy of the memo. of 25th May to Cosgrave; (2) copy of memo. of 27th May to yourself; (3) copy of my letter (herewith) to Mr. Seddon. Please instruct Cosgrave to reply that he is directed by the Speaker to forward the information asked for in respect of the list of men already on the staff, their terms of engagement, and the authority by whom appointed. As regards any further messengers to be engaged, he is to state that Mr. Speaker directs him to say that he himself will address the Minister on the subject.—W. J. S.

SIR,—

Ashburton, 30th May, 1892.

I have the honour to forward herewith copy of a letter addressed by me to the Hon. the Minister for Public Works, together with copies of documents therein referred to.

As in my letter to Mr. Seddon, I here again express my conviction that the action proposed to be taken in regard to the Legislative Department is not in accordance with the intentions of the House.

I have, &c.,  
W. J. STEWARD,  
Speaker, House of Representatives.

The Hon. the Premier.

SIR,—

Ashburton, 30th May, 1892.

I have the honour to represent that there has been brought under my notice—(1) A copy of a memorandum from the Public Works Department, under date 25th May, addressed to the Chief Messenger, in the absence of the Serjeant-at-Arms; and (2) an instruction (dated 26th May) from yourself to Mr. Friend, instructing him to notify you of any vacancies which may occur in the Legislative Department, on the ground that it is claimed that, "the estimates being now under the control of Government, all appointments must be made by the Minister in charge."

As to the memorandum first referred to (that to Mr. Cosgrave, Chief Messenger), I note that he is called upon to submit proposals to the Public Works Department as to any extra messengers required beyond those already engaged, so that, if approved, authority may be given to the Labour Department to select suitable men. To this is appended copy of a Cabinet minute, ordering that "a circular be sent to departments to the effect that the services of any artisan or labourer required shall only be procured through the Labour Bureau."

As to this, I submit that the Cabinet minute above quoted does not warrant the sending of the memorandum referred to to Mr. Cosgrave, inasmuch as messengers of the House are neither artisans nor labourers. Secondly, I regard the memorandum to Mr. Cosgrave, and still more that to Mr. Friend, as an interference in the management of the staff of the Legislative Department, founded upon a mistaken view of the intentions of the House when last session the Government was made responsible for the Legislative estimates.

I hold that the department's estimates are to be submitted to and approved by the Government; but that the right of appointing the officers, whose salaries are provided for therein, still remains as before, and that those officers are still responsible to the Speaker, and, under him, to the Clerk of the House or the Serjeant-at-Arms, as the case may be.

You yourself distinctly indorsed that view during the discussion in the House, having stated (see *Hansard*, Vol. lxxiv., page 727) that "the Speaker would be looked upon practically as the head of the department, who would advise the Government. As to interfering with officers in the way referred to, he did not believe that any such interference would take place. The whole thing would practically be under the Speaker, except that he would advise the Government."

As a matter of fact, by my direction, the estimates for the current year have been submitted, and I have not heard from the Government as to any suggested alterations in the amounts of the votes to be asked; and neither during last session's debates, nor in the terms of the resolution