

SESS. II.—1897.  
NEW ZEALAND.

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# CONFERENCE OF PREMIERS,

HELD AT HOBART, 2ND, 3RD, AND 4TH FEBRUARY, 1897.

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

AN informal meeting of the Conference was held at the Chief Secretary's Office on the afternoon of Monday, the 1st February, 1897, the under-mentioned gentlemen being present: The Hon. Sir Hugh Nelson, Queensland; the Hon. C. C. Kingston, South Australia; the Hon. Sir Edward Braddon, Tasmania; the Hon. Sir George Turner, Victoria; the Hon. Sir John Forrest, Western Australia; and the Hon. R. J. Seddon, New Zealand.

The Hon. R. J. Seddon moved, That Sir Edward Braddon be appointed President of the Conference. The motion, having been seconded by Sir Hugh Nelson, was carried unanimously.

Mr. George Steward, Secretary to the Premier of Tasmania, was appointed Secretary to the Conference.

An agenda was agreed upon, and it was decided to meet next day, at 11 a.m.

The Hon. G. H. Reid took part in the Conference on and from Wednesday, the 3rd February, 1897.

## MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS.

### (1.) *Secretary of State for Colonies' Suggestions on Closer Trade Relations with the Mother-country.*

*Resolved*, That this Conference favours closer commercial relations between the Mother-country and the Australasian Colonies on a basis of mutual advantage. The Conference further desires to state its opinion that full inquiry into the subject, whether by a commission of experts or otherwise, should be instituted, and that any definite proposals subsequently made should receive the fullest consideration from the Australasian Governments.

### (2.) *Intercolonial Reciprocity.*

*Resolved*, That this question be postponed until after the conclusion of the Federal Convention.

### (3.) *Australasian Quarantine.*

*Resolved*, That the recommendations of the Australian Quarantine Conference, as modified by the resolutions of the Premiers' Conference of March, 1896, be adopted, and a system of Federal quarantine be established. That the Federal stations be: Albany, Thursday Island, and Adelaide. And, if New Zealand and Tasmania concur in the agreement drafted by Queensland, they will join with Hobart and Auckland as quarantine-stations.

### (4.) *Codification of Commercial Law of United Kingdom and all Colonies.*

*Resolved*, That, in the opinion of this Conference, the best course to adopt is to deal with each subject of commercial law by separate Bill, as this will expedite the work, and enable the colonies to adopt the portions of the code as passed, with such modifications as the circumstances of the different colonies may require.

### (5.) *Treaty with Japan.*

*Resolved*, That this Conference, having considered the Japanese treaty with its proposed alterations, affirms the decision of the Sydney Conference of March, 1896, not to take advantage of its provisions.

### (6.) *Conservation of British Interests in Pacific Islands.*

*Resolved*, That the Premiers of Australia, New Zealand, and Tasmania, in Conference assembled, earnestly urge that the Imperial authorities will zealously guard and conserve British interests in the Pacific.

(7.) *Naturalisation of Aliens.*

*Resolved*, That, except as regards restricted races, the naturalisation laws of the colonies should be assimilated with a view to the recognition of the naturalisation certificates of each colony throughout Australasia; and that a Bill should be prepared for the purpose by South Australia.

(8.) *Export Australian Produce Uniform Legislation.*

*Resolved*, That, in the opinion of this Conference, it is desirable that uniform legislation should forthwith be adopted to prohibit the export of live-stock, meat, dairy produce, wine, and fruit not officially certified as of good quality and fit for export.

New South Wales dissenting. Tasmania agrees, with the reservation that it must first be made apparent that due effect can be given to this legislation.

(9.) *Reservation of Colonial Bills, and Reply to Colonial Office Circular of 14th October thereon.*

*Resolved*, That a Bill for securing to the local Parliaments increased powers of legislation without reservation be prepared by Victoria and South Australia for consideration by the colonies, and for recommendation to the Imperial Government for enactment.

(10.) *Issue of H.M. Fiat in Cases provided by Local Law.*

The Premier of Western Australia brought under the notice of the Conference the correspondence respecting petitions of right from the Western Australian Land Company (Limited), and from Mr. William Wilkinson, to Her Majesty the Queen.

*Resolved*, That, in the opinion of this Conference, Her Majesty's fiat should not issue to supersede the decision of the local executive on the subject of any reference to the Supreme Court of local claims against the Crown.

(11.) *Paris Exhibition, 1900.*

*Resolved*, That the colonies of Australasia which exhibit at the Paris Exhibition of 1900 exhibit as one court, forming part of the court of the British Empire.

(12.) *Judicial Notice being taken of Laws of other Colonies in Legal Proceedings.*

*Resolved*, That judicial notice should be taken in the several colonies of Australasia of the laws of the other colonies, and that Victoria prepare the necessary Bill.

(13.) *Lighthouse at the Snares.*

*Resolved*, That the question of the erection of a lighthouse at the Snares be made the subject of an agreement to be submitted by New Zealand to the Governments of New South Wales, Victoria, and Tasmania for their consideration.

(14.) *Uniformity of Legislation on Merchandise Marks.*

*Resolved*, That it is desirable that the legislation of the various colonies in respect of merchandise marks should forthwith be assimilated on the lines of the most recent Imperial legislation, and that New South Wales prepare a Bill to give effect to this resolution.

(15.) *Summoning Witnesses from other Colonies.*

*Resolved*, That, in the opinion of this Conference, it is desirable that the necessary alteration should be made in Act 44 and 45 Vict., cap. 69, sect. 15, so as to provide for the punishment of witnesses disobeying a summons under such section, and that Victoria be requested to take the necessary steps to obtain such alteration.

(16.) *Alteration in Mode of preparing Statistics relating to Imports and Exports.*

*Resolved*, That it is desirable that uniformity of practice should be adopted by the various colonies of Australasia as to the preparation of statistics of imports and exports.

(17.) *Federal Company Law for Australasia.*

*Resolved*, That the assimilation of the company law of Australasia is desirable, and that New Zealand prepare a Bill to give effect to this.

(18.) *Appointment of Officer of the Royal Engineers as Consulting Military Engineer to the Australian Colonies.*

*Resolved*, That no appointment be made at present.

(19.) *Selection of Minister to represent Australasia at Washington Postal Conference.*

*Resolved*, That the Conference is of opinion that Australasia should, if possible, be represented at the Washington Postal Conference by a Postal Minister of one of the Australasian Colonies, to be elected by the Postal Ministers.

(20.) *Visit of Premiers to England for Celebration of Her Majesty's Sixty Years' Reign.*

The Premiers assembled at Hobart are deeply sensible of the high honour conferred upon the Australasian Colonies by the invitation to the Premiers to visit England to join in the commemoration of the sixtieth anniversary of the Queen's accession, and also of the unique and gratifying character of the demonstration in which they are invited to participate. In no part of the Empire will this commemoration be regarded with a higher feeling of loyalty to and affection for Her Most Gracious Majesty than in Australasia. But the Premiers cannot collectively accept this invitation, and therefore must leave the answer to the Secretary of State's message to be made by each of them separately on return to their several homes and after consideration of the exigencies of public business.

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At the conclusion of the proceedings, it was moved by Mr. Seddon, That a vote of thanks be accorded to the President. This was carried unanimously; and Sir Edward Braddon, in the course of his reply, expressed the hope that the next meeting of Premiers would be held in New Zealand.

Mr. Reid moved a vote of thanks to the secretary.

Carried unanimously.

The proceedings of the Conference closed at 9 p.m. on the 4th February, having sat from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., and from 2.15 p.m. to 6 p.m., 6.30 p.m., and 9 p.m., on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th instant, respectively, and the Conference adjourned *sine die*.

GEORGE STEWARD, Secretary.

E. BRADDON, President.

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