

On the same day the following telegram was sent by me to His Excellency the Governor at Woodville:—

“Wellington, 22nd March, 1909.

“His Excellency the Governor, Woodville.

“THE Prime Minister presents his compliments to His Excellency the Governor, and desires that the following cable be sent to the Secretary of State for the Colonies—begins: ‘The New Zealand Government offers to defray the cost of the immediate building and arming by the British Government of one first-class battleship of the latest type, and, if subsequent events show it to be necessary, will also provide the cost of a second war-ship of the same type.’

“J. G. WARD.”

At the same time the following telegram was also sent to His Excellency:—

“Wellington, 22nd March, 1909.

“His Excellency the Governor, Woodville.

“I FEEL sure that in sending telegram *re* Government’s offer of a battleship Your Excellency will be pleased to know that upon the proposal being submitted by me to Cabinet it received the unanimous indorsement of my colleagues. In advising the Home authorities, I shall be glad if your Excellency will kindly intimate that the New Zealand Government must, of course, obtain ratification of Parliament, and such legislation as may be required to make the gift effective, and that in the meantime any advance necessary for the building of the war-ship will no doubt be made by the British Government, and any money which the British Government so expends before Parliament meets will be taken over as part of our contribution.

“J. G. WARD.”

On the same day I received the following telegram from His Excellency:—

“Kaikoura North, 22nd March, 1909.

“The Right Hon. the Prime Minister, Wellington.

“HAVE received with pride and satisfaction your telegram regarding New Zealand Government offer to Imperial Government to defray cost of battleship or battleships, and have this day cabled accordingly to the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

“PLUNKET.”

The following is a cablegram from the Secretary of State for the Colonies to His Excellency the Governor:—

“His Excellency the Governor, Wellington.

“London, 23rd March, 1909.

“PLEASE hasten to assure your Prime Minister that his message has been received by me with the highest appreciation of the generous and spontaneous offer made on behalf of New Zealand. It will be at once laid before His Majesty’s Government.

“CREWE.”

The following is a cablegram from the Secretary of State for the Colonies to His Excellency the Governor:—

“His Excellency the Governor, Wellington.

“London, 24th March, 1909.

“I AM commanded by His Majesty the King to inform you that His Majesty is deeply gratified by the patriotic feeling displayed by New Zealand towards Mother-country in their splendid offer, and to convey at once his gratitude and high appreciation for fine patriotism and generosity shown in the magnificent offer made so promptly and spontaneously.

“CREWE.”

The following is a telegram from the Prime Minister to His Excellency the Governor at Opotiki:—

“His Excellency the Governor, Opotiki.

“Wellington, 26th March, 1909.

“SIR JOSEPH WARD presents his compliments to His Excellency the Governor, and acknowledges the receipt of the telegram of twenty-fourth March forwarded by Secretary of State for the Colonies conveying the message from His Majesty the King. He will be glad if His Excellency will be good enough to convey through the Secretary of State to His Majesty the King the New Zealand Government’s deep sense of gratitude for the gracious message, and for His Majesty’s generous recognition of New Zealand’s offer of a war-ship to the Mother-country. The people of New Zealand are pleased to evince in a tangible way their loyalty to the King to help in maintaining the strength of the Empire.

“J. G. WARD.”

This is a telegram from the Secretary of State for the Colonies to His Excellency the Governor:—

“His Excellency the Governor, Wellington.

“London, 24th March, 1909.

“IN further reply your telegram 22nd March, desire you to express to Sir Joseph Ward and to your Government in the warmest terms the feeling of appreciation and gratitude with which His Majesty’s Government have received the offer so generously made. In view of the uncertainty that exists as to the character and extent of the demand which may be made on the national resources in the following year, the offer of the Government of New Zealand to bear within that period the cost of providing one first-class battleship of the latest type, and of a second of the same type should subsequent events show it to be necessary, is most gratefully accepted by His Majesty’s Government. Your Government will doubtless understand that it is impossible to enter into details by telegram, but you will receive at an early date full communication by despatch, as His Majesty’s Government desires to consult with the Government of New Zealand as to time it may become appropriate to give effect to their public-spirited proposal. So far as the coming financial year is concerned, the provisions and powers for which sanction is being asked in the Naval estimates now before Parliament affords ample security.

“CREWE.”