

DESPATCH from the Right Hon. the PRIME MINISTER to 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 warship 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.

(Signed) J. G. WARD.

DESPATCH from the Right Hon. the PRIME MINISTER, Wellington, to His EXCELLENCY the GOVERNOR, Opotiki.

Wellington, 26th March, 1909.

THE Prime Minister presents his compliments to His Excellency the Governor, and acknowledges receipt of the telegram from the Secretary of State for the Colonies of 24th instant, and would be glad if he would send the following reply to the Secretary of State—begins: "The Government and people of New Zealand are much gratified at acceptance of their offer. Their sole desire is to assist the Empire as far as New Zealand's resources permit in maintaining its naval supremacy. They feel that the Imperial Government can best determine what shape and time of contribution will best effect that end, and therefore, as desired by the Imperial Government, the New Zealand Government will await details in despatch."

(Signed) J. G. WARD.

DESPATCH from His EXCELLENCY the Governor, Kawhia, to the Right Hon. the PRIME MINISTER, Wellington.

Kawhia, 3rd May, 1909.

The Governor has received the following telegram from the Secretary of State for the Colonies, dated London, 30th April:—

The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, President of the Imperial Conference, has desired me to ask you to convey the following message to the Prime Minister. Message begins: "It will no doubt be within your knowledge that on the 29th March the Canadian House of Commons passed a resolution to the following effect." Resolution begins: "Resolutions of the Canadian House of Commons, March 29th, 1909. That this House fully recognises the duty of the people of Canada and their increase in numbers and wealth to assume in larger measure the responsibilities of national defence. The House is of opinion that under present constitutional relations between the Mother Country and the self-governing dominions the payment of regular and periodical contribution to the Imperial Treasury for naval and military purposes it will not, so far as Canada is concerned be the most satisfactory solution of the question of defence. The House will cordially approve of any necessary expenditure designed to promote the speedy organization of a Canadian Naval Service in co-operation with and in close relation to the Imperial Navy along the lines suggested by the Admiralty at the last Imperial Conference and in full sympathy with the view that the naval supremacy of Britain is essential to the security of commerce, the safety of the Empire, and the peace of the world. The House expresses its firm conviction that whenever the need arises the Canadian people will be found ready and willing to make any sacrifice that is required to give to the Imperial authorities the most loyal and hearty co-operation in every movement for the maintenance of the integrity and honour of the Empire." Resolution ends. I understand that the Dominion Government propose that its Minister of Defence should come here at an early date to confer with the Imperial naval and military authorities upon technical matters arising on the resolution. His Majesty's Government have also before them recent patriotic proposals made by New Zealand and Australia, proposals most highly appreciated by the Mother Country, and demanding very cordial and careful consideration both as to principle and detail. I desire, therefore, to commend to you the following important suggestion—viz., that a conference of representatives of the self-governing dominions conveyed under the terms of the resolutions of one of the Conference of 1907, which provides that such subsidiary Conferences should be held in London early in next July. The object of the Conference would be to discuss the general questions of naval and military defence of the Empire, with special reference to the Canadian resolution and to the proposals from New Zealand and Australia to which have referred. I assume that as the resolution would be generally upon technical or quasi-technical naval and military matters that the other Governments of the self-governing dominions would elect to be represented as in the case of Canada by their Ministers of Defence or, failing them, by some other members of the Government assisted by expert advice, but it is entirely for the Government of New Zealand to decide the precise form of its representation. The Conference would, of course, be of a purely consultative character. It would be held in private, and its deliberations would be assisted by the presence of members of other expert advisers of His Majesty's Government. I am addressing a similar message to the other members of the Imperial Conference. Message ends. I am strongly of opinion that as early confidential exchange of views between His Majesty's Government and the Governments of His Majesty's self-governing dominions beyond the seas would be of the greatest mutual advantage, and I therefore trust that your Prime Minister and his colleagues will see their way to adopt the proposal." End of Lord Crewe's cable.

(Signed) PLUNKET.