

TREASURY CHAMBERS,

3rd May, 1851.

GENTLEMEN,

I am commanded by the Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury to transmit herewith a copy of the circular letter dated 19th ultimo, which Earl Grey has addressed to the respective Governors of Colonies relative to the transfer of the Customs Establishments to the local Governments of those Colonies, for your information, with reference to your Reports of the 3rd August, 1850, and 28th March 1851, on those subjects.

I am, &amp;c., &amp;c.,

G. CORNEWALL LEWIS.

The Commissioners of Customs.

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COPY OF EARL GREY'S DESPATCH.

(Circular.)

DOWNING STREET,

19th April, 1851.

SIR,

With reference to my despatch of the 8th August last, on the subject of the Customs establishment in the Colony under your government, I have to acquaint you that I have since been in communication with the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury, with reference to certain arrangements which would become necessary, especially as regards the delegation to colonial officers, after the transfer of the existing Customs establishment to the Colonial Governments, of such powers and functions as, in the case of Colonies which had been subject to the Imperial duties imposed by the Act for regulating the trade of British Possessions, have been vested in the Controller of Customs and Navigation Laws; and likewise as regard the preparation and punctual transmission by those officers of returns relating to trade and navigation.

It is the intention of Her Majesty's Government that the control of these establishments, and all future appointments in them, should be transferred to the respective Colonial Governments, from such date after the receipt in each Colony of these and of corresponding instructions, which will be addressed by the Commissioners of Customs to their officers, as may be arranged by the respective Governments and Legislatures; and thereupon, the deductions from the officers' salaries on account of the Superannuation Fund, under the provision of the Act 4 and 5 William IV, cap. 24, will be discontinued, and any grants of superannuation or retired allowance in respect of services subsequent to the date of the transfer of the establishment will depend upon the Colonial Government and Legislatures; at the same time it will be your duty to avail yourself as much as possible of the continued services of the officers on the present establishment.

As it appears to be essential for the interests and accommodation of the local traders and ship owners in the Colonies to which the present arrangement is applicable, that officers should be stationed in them, competent and duly empowered to perform similar duties to those devolving on the Controller of Customs and Navigation Laws in the American and West Indian Colonies, Her Majesty's Government propose that provision for that purpose should be made by the Commissioners of Customs, by conferring the requisite powers in that respect on the Colonial officers of Customs, requiring, at the same time, as a condition of the accommodation so to be afforded to the colonists, that it shall be incumbent on those officers to furnish such returns or other documents relating to trade, as are required for the information of the Imperial Government and Parliament, as well as perform the other functions attaching to the appointment of Controller of Customs and Navigation Laws.

You will be further informed of the details of this arrangement, and such deputations and instructions will be transmitted to you, for the principal or other Customs officers, in as may be requisite.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your most obedient humble Servant.

GREY.