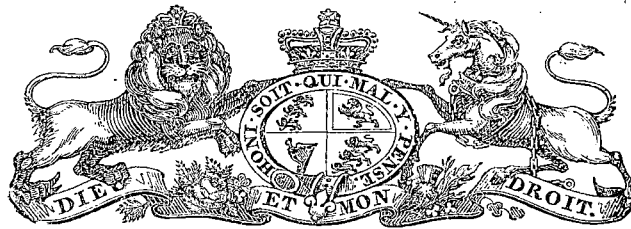


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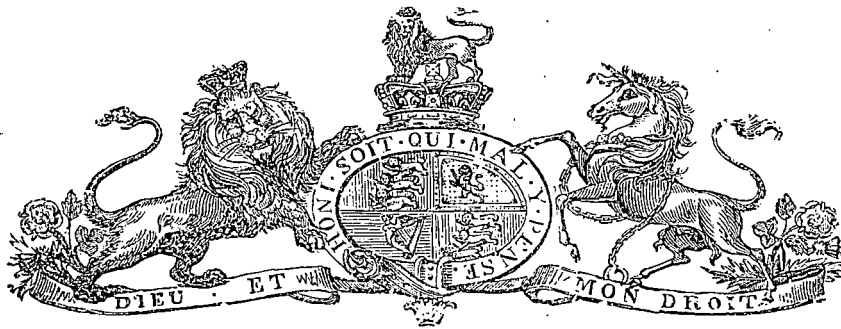
PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

AUSTRALASIAN FEDERATION:

Copies of Telegrams that passed between the Premiers of the Australasian Colonies in regard to a Conference after the result of the Federal Referendum had been declared.

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by His Excellency's Command.

Cost of printing—£1 17s.



AUSTRALASIAN FEDERATION.

(Copies of Telegrams that passed between the Premiers of the Australasian Colonies in regard to a Conference after the result of the Federal Referendum had been declared.)

From The Premier of New South Wales to Premiers of Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania, (copy also sent to Premiers of Western Australia and Queensland), dated 4th June, 1898.

"CONFIDENTIAL.—I could not cordially support the Bill framed by the Convention, and tell you frankly that its prospects will not improve; but I should be sorry to see all our labours brought to a standstill. I am going to submit to Cabinet on Tuesday a proposal that the Premiers of Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania and myself (Sir John Forrest being, I fear, too far away to join, though afterwards to be consulted) meet to see if it is possible to arrive at any alteration of the terms of the Bill that would make it more acceptable to the people of New South Wales. It would also be advisable, I think, to invite the Premier of Queensland to join in this meeting. I should like to be able to take the Bill, in a more acceptable shape, to the country as a vital part of my Ministerial policy. It may be said how can the Bill be altered? The simplest way would be by inserting in the Addresses of Parliament in each Colony transmitting the Bill the changes agreed upon. Another way would be by Act of Parliament, specifying the changes agreed upon and putting the Convention Bill in schedule. The place of meeting would be immaterial to me."

From The Premier of Victoria to The Premier of New South Wales, dated 5th June, 1898.

"WHILE I am anxious to do anything which will enable federation to take place on reasonable terms, I much doubt if your suggestion will find favour in Victoria, but if you will submit the proposed amendments I will carefully consider them and confidentially consult my colleagues and leading federationists. Confidential."

From The Premier of Western Australia to The Premier of New South Wales, dated 6th June, 1898.

"VERY confidential.—I thank you for your telegram, but do not agree with your proposed procedure. There is a strong feeling here amongst producers and manufacturers against the Bill as it is, and any modification of it in favour of any other Colony would be disastrous here, and even as the Bill is it is questionable whether Parliament will approve of it. By our Enabling Act New South Wales has to be one of the federating Colonies, and as legally she cannot now join, it is a question whether we should now go on with the Bill and court defeat, as, with the knowledge that New South Wales has not passed the Bill, there would be no enthusiasm about it, and people would not take the trouble to vote."

From The Premier of South Australia to The Premier of New South Wales, dated 7th June, 1898.

"CONFIDENTIAL.—As a large majority of all Australia represented at the Convention, and large majorities of all the States so represented have decided to accept the Commonwealth Bill, we are not disposed to favour proposals for the alteration of their decision. We think that any attempt at alteration of the direct popular decision, whether made by Governments or Parliaments, might very properly be resented by the people. Further, no Conference for considering the work of the Convention could recommend itself to us in the absence of any colony represented at the Convention, or if any colony were admitted which had not been so represented, and which had not given any Parliamentary assurance of some desire for federation."

From The Premier of Tasmania to The Premier of New South Wales, dated 7th June, 1898.

I CONCUR in view expressed by Kingston, except that I think no Conference whatever should consider the work of Convention.

From The Premier of Queensland to The Premier of New South Wales, dated 7th June, 1898.

I RECEIVED your telegram, but shall not be able to give it the attention it deserves until I reach Brisbane on Saturday next. In the meantime I should be glad to receive a more definite statement of what you propose.

From the Premier of New South Wales to The Premiers of Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia, and Tasmania, dated 7th June, 1898.

AT a meeting of the Cabinet held this morning the position of the federal movement was considered, and I have to inform you that the views expressed in my confidential telegram of Saturday met with the approval of the members of the Government present. Whilst we see no prospect of the acceptance in New South Wales at any subsequent stage of the Convention Bill, the events and results of the recent campaign show that our people as a whole are sincere well-wishers to the cause of Australian Union, and that, with alterations, the Bill would be accepted by a large majority of the electors. Under these circumstances my colleagues cordially concur in my request to you that the Premiers of the Colonies represented on the Convention should meet as soon as possible to confer and exchange views as to an improvement in those provisions of the Bill which affected most seriously its success on Friday last in this Colony. If the Conference be agreed upon we will undertake to prepare and send to you, before its meeting, particulars of the subjects we desire to invite you to reconsider, and our views respecting them. We strongly suggest that the Premier of Queensland should be invited to the Conference proposed.

From The Premier of Tasmania to The Premier of New South Wales, dated 8th June, 1898.

CONFIDENTIAL.—Can only reiterate previous reply.

From The Premier of South Australia to The Premier of New South Wales, dated 8th June, 1898.

WE have yours of yesterday evening *re* Federation, and in reply, after Cabinet consultation, we confirm our confidential wire of yesterday morning. We note that you were unable to cordially support the Bill for which you voted, and no doubt the withholding of your powerful influence considerably reduced the majority by which it was carried. Hitherto we have most loyally co-operated with you—this too despite discouraging alterations of the Hobart agreement and of the Federal Enabling Act, to which alterations we were no parties—but we must now definitely decline to participate in any attempt to reject a Constitution which has been accepted by the direct votes of majorities of the people of all the federating States and to substitute another more favourable to one State, and in respect of which it is not even suggested that the people should be afforded an opportunity of voting. Had our loyalty to the cause of Federation been less than it is, we might have reduced the majority in favour of the Bill in South Australia, but this, in our opinion, would not have justified us at the instance of a South Australian minority in seeking to set aside the popular verdict of all Australia with a view of securing better terms for our colony.

From The Premier of Victoria to The Premier of New South Wales, dated 9th June, 1898.

THE Government consider that, with a view to affording every possible opportunity for the consideration of the Federal issue, your proposal for a meeting of Premiers should be accepted. If you will again communicate with the other Premiers, I will join you in urging them to agree to the proposed meeting,—the question as to whether any amendments can be made in the Bill, or, if made, how they could be submitted to the people, presents some difficulties. Certainly they would require to be submitted first in New South Wales, and afterwards, if accepted there, submitted to the people of the other colonies.

From The Premier of New South Wales to The Premier of Victoria, dated 10th June, 1898.

I HAVE received your telegram, respecting proposed Conference of Premiers, with pleasure. Of course, the proposed meeting would be a mere waste of time unless the Premiers are prepared to make the Bill more acceptable to New South Wales, not in immaterial matters, but in matters of substance. This remark is suggested by an interview with you reported from Melbourne in the *Daily Telegraph* of this morning. I will send copy of your telegram and of this reply to the other Premiers.

From The Premier of New South Wales to The Premiers of South Australia, Tasmania, and Western Australia.

I HAVE received the following telegram from Sir George Turner:—"The Government consider that with a view to affording every possible opportunity for the consideration of the Federal issue, your proposal for a meeting of Premiers should be accepted. If you will again communicate with the other Premiers I

will join you in urging them to agree to the proposed meeting. The question as to whether any amendments can be made in the Bill, or if made, how they could be submitted to the people, presents some difficulties. Certainly they would require to be submitted first in New South Wales, and afterwards, if accepted there, submitted to the people of the other colonies,"—to which I have sent the following reply:—"I have received your telegram respecting proposed conference of Premiers with pleasure. Of course, the proposed meeting would be a mere waste of time unless the Premiers are prepared to make the Bill more acceptable to New South Wales—not in immaterial matters, but in matters of substance. This remark is suggested by an interview with you reported from Melbourne in the *Daily Telegraph* of this morning. I will send copy of your telegram and of this reply to the other Premiers." I should be glad to hear that you can see your way to accept conference.

From The Premier of New South Wales to The Premier of Queensland, dated 10th June, 1898.

I send for your information copies of additional telegrams:—

Sir George Turner to me:—

"The Government consider that, with a view to affording every possible opportunity for the consideration of the federal issue your proposal for a meeting of Premiers should be accepted. If you will again communicate with the other Premiers, I will join you in urging them to agree to the proposed meeting. The question as to whether any amendments can be made in the Bill, or, if made, how they could be submitted to the people, presents some difficulties. Certainly, they would require to be submitted first in New South Wales, and afterwards, if accepted there, submitted to the people of the other Colonies."

To which I have replied:—

"I have received your telegram respecting proposed conference of Premiers with pleasure. Of course the proposed meeting would be a mere waste of time unless the Premiers are prepared to make the Bill more acceptable to New South Wales, not in immaterial matters, but in matters of substance. This remark is suggested by an interview with you reported from Melbourne in the *Daily Telegraph* of this morning. I will send copy of your telegram and of this reply to the other Premiers."

From the Premier of Victoria to The Premier of New South Wales, dated 11th June, 1898.

In view of your last telegram and the doubts which exist in the various Colonies as to whether a meeting of Premiers should take place to discuss federation matters, would it not be well for you to at once intimate what amendments you desire, so that every one may know exactly what it is proposed to deal with? If this be done it may have the effect of inducing the other Premiers to meet. I strongly advise you, in the interests of the movement, to carry out this suggestion.

From the Premier of Tasmania to The Premier of New South Wales, dated 11th June, 1898.

HOLDING that Premiers have neither right nor power to amend the Constitution passed by people on referendum in any way, I necessarily resent more strongly proposal to alter the Bill in matters of substance.

From The Premier of Western Australia to The Premier of New South Wales, dated 11th June, 1898.

CONFIDENTIAL.—Having given due consideration to your suggestion that the Premiers should meet with a view of discussing amendments to the Federation Bill, so as to make substantial concessions in favour of New South Wales, I regret to inform you that I am not in favour of the course you propose, and would not, therefore, be able to attend the proposed meeting.

From The Premier of Queensland to the Premier of New South Wales, dated 11th June, 1898.

I AM willing to attend the Conference you propose. I should like the date to be fixed to suit my engagements. I have been absent from Brisbane for six weeks, and our Parliament meets on the 26th July. I should suggest the end of this month. I have sent copy of this telegram to other Premiers.

From The Premier of New South Wales to The Premier of Queensland, dated 13th June, 1898.

RECEIVED your message with much pleasure. Desire especially to move in federal matters in unison with Queensland, believing interests of our two great Colonies to be inseparably connected.

[*In continuation of Paper No. 71.*]

Copies of additional Telegrams from The Premier of New South Wales to Premiers of other Colonies in regard to a Conference after the Federal Referendum had been declared. (*Note.*—Despatched when on a visit to the country, and no record kept in the Treasury, hence the omission.)

To The Premier of Queensland, dated 11th June, 1898.

IN view of certain statements made in Melbourne by Sir George Turner, I have informed him that it would be a sheer waste of time to meet if the necessity of making alterations in substance in the Bill is not admitted by him and by the other Premiers who attended the Convention.

To The Premier of Tasmania, dated 11th June, 1898.

I ACCEPT your strongly-worded message, just received, as a final refusal to join in the proposed Conference of Premiers, and will make no further communication to you on the subject.

The Treasury, New South Wales,
7th September, 1898.