

(No. 8.)



1863.

TASMANIA.
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

AUSTRALIAN CONFERENCE.

Laid on the Table by Mr. Whyte, and ordered by the Council to be printed,
June 17, 1863.



INSTRUCTIONS to the DELEGATES from Tasmania to the INTER-COLONIAL CONFERENCE appointed and accredited by His Excellency Colonel THOMAS GORE BROWNE, Companion of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath, Captain-General and Governor-in-Chief of the Island of Tasmania and its Dependencies.

CUSTOMS' TARIFFS.

THE proposed Meeting of Delegates at an Inter-Colonial Conference has always contemplated for its primary object the discussion of the respective fiscal systems of the various Australian Colonies, with a view to the establishment, if possible, of some approximation to uniformity of Customs' Tariffs, and the promotion of greater freedom of exchange of the principal articles of production of the several Colonies represented at the Conference.

But while the prominence and importance of these objects are thus unreservedly admitted by my Government, the special interests of Tasmania must, at all times, be kept steadily in view by the Delegates entrusted with the representation of this Colony at the approaching Conference.

To advance the general welfare of Tasmania, as a separate and independent Community, and to maintain its Public Revenues at their legitimate level, is the immediate object, as it must ever be the paramount duty, of my Responsible Advisers; and I entertain a confident expectation that a similar sentiment will be found to animate the Tasmanian Delegates.

However desirable, therefore, it may appear, on broad general grounds, to secure harmonious action and uniformity of system throughout the Australian Colonies, the Delegates from Tasmania must bear in mind that they are not empowered to legislate as a Congress of Representatives for a group of Independent Provinces; but that their proper mission is to ascertain, by mutual consultation and amicable discussion, what are the views entertained by other Delegates on the subjects that may be brought before the Conference, and to discover what are the principles of action on these heads likely to find practical acceptance with the Governments and Legislatures of the other Australian Colonies.

The Delegates will therefore take care not to commit my Government to a definite concurrence in proposals for future combined action in any direction that may seem to involve a possible sacrifice of the interests, or to risk a diminution of the Revenue, of Tasmania.

In discussing the adjustment or re-arrangement of the Customs' Tariffs of the several Colonies, the Delegates must not lose sight of the present aspect of this question before the Parliament of Tasmania.

My Advisers are, at this moment, engaged in anxious deliberation upon a revision of the existing Tasmanian Tariff, on a system which excludes the admission of Duties levied on the *Ad Valorem* principle.

It will, consequently, be impossible for my Government to acquiesce in any suggestion for the adoption of a common or uniform Tariff based on the recognition of that principle, or admitting *Ad Valorem* Duties as one of its constituent elements.

With this reservation, the Delegates are authorised to intimate to the Conference the readiness of my Government to concur, generally, in the adoption of a uniform Tariff of Customs common to all the Australian Colonies.

The main object of such a Tariff would be the promotion of a freer exchange of the products of the several Colonies. At present, the Customs' Duties levied, for revenue purposes in all the Colonies alike, upon many articles of general consumption produced by Australia as a whole, in common with Great Britain and other countries in both hemispheres, operate almost as a prohibition to the commercial interchange, between the various members of the Australian Group, of the special productions peculiar to the soil and climate of each individual Colony.

The only practical remedy for this anomalous and undesirable condition of our commercial relations with communities so closely united to each other by the ties of common origin, allegiance, and language, must be sought in the establishment of a general fiscal system, by which the indigenous productions and home manufactures of the several Colonies constituting the Australian Group shall be interchangeably admitted at the Ports and across the frontiers of neighboring or conterminous Provinces, exempt from the Duties of Customs imposed by every member of the collective Body upon similar productions of British or Foreign growth and manufacture. This result might, not improbably, be attained without much difficulty, after amicable deliberation and some mutual concessions, by arrangement between the several Governments, and the enactment of an identical Tariff by the various Australian Legislatures.

But, unfortunately, the fiscal policy of Great Britain, which forbids the Governors of these Colonies to assent to Bills imposing Differential Duties, must always interpose a fatal obstruction to the effectual realization of this design. And it is in this direction, in the opinion of my Government, that the labours of the Conference may be most usefully and beneficially extended.

The Tasmanian Delegates are, consequently, empowered to communicate to the Conference, that Her Majesty's Ministers in this Colony will be prepared to adopt a joint representation to the Secretary of State, having for its object the removal of this restriction upon the fiscal legislation of the Australian Colonies, on a question so materially affecting their commercial relations as adjoining communities; and thus practically limiting the action of their Parliaments in dealing with a purely domestic matter, by the needless interposition of Imperial considerations.

The aim of this remonstrance would be to secure for Australia a practical recognition, by Great Britain and Foreign Nations, of its commercial and fiscal, as of its geographical, unity.

It is obvious, that if this principle were admitted by the Imperial Government, the Australian Colonies would be generally benefitted to the extent of the advantages derivable from a far larger Inter-Colonial consumption than is now possible of their respective peculiar productions.

If the Royal Assent might now be given to Bills imposing, what may be termed comprehensively, "Inter-Colonial Differential Duties," Tasmania would be enabled to import and consume many productions of the Continental Colonies which are now practically excluded from her markets by the Duties uniformly imposed, in obedience to the requirements of Imperial policy, upon all similar imported articles, whether of European or Australian origin. The articles of Wine and Malt Liquor afford a familiar instance of the injurious effects of this Imperial prohibition of Differential Duties.

Were this restrictive policy abandoned, the Malt Liquors of Tasmania, for the production of which we enjoy advantages of temperature and climate superior to those of our Continental neighbours, might find a profitable market in the Ports of New South Wales, South Australia, Victoria, and Queensland. At present the Duty levied on these articles, in common with British Malt Liquors, proves a serious obstacle, if not a positive prohibition, to their successful competition in those Colonies with European commodities of the same class.

In the same way, the Duty now unavoidably chargeable upon Wines the production of South Australia and New South Wales, (and probably, at no distant date, on the Wines, Rum, Sugar, and Coffee of Queensland,) amounts to so large an addition to the cost of production, as renders their general consumption in Tasmania a practical impossibility.

Other articles in the same category will readily occur to the Delegates; and my Government is specially desirous that the advisability of arriving at some mutual and common understanding on this important subject, between the several Executives and Legislatures of the Colonies represented at the Conference, should be regarded by the Delegates from Tasmania as the first and principal object of their mission.

It may not, perhaps, be possible for many years to come to sacrifice the Revenue derivable from an Import Duty on Australian Wines, Malt Liquors, and some other articles of Australian production. But, were the Imperial restriction relaxed in favour of these Colonies, such articles might be interchangeably admitted throughout the Australias at a lower rate of Duty than that levied on similar British and Foreign articles. It is needless to enlarge upon the advantages of this result in the case of communities almost without manufactures, and with a limited list of exports, which are now, in effect, refused admission to their nearest and natural market.

LIGHT-HOUSES.

There is another question of no inconsiderable importance to the general interests of Australian Commerce, and specially affecting those of the Government and Public of Tasmania ; namely, the Light Dues.

It will be the duty of the Tasmanian Delegates to represent to the Conference, that the present charges for the maintenance of the several Light-houses on the Australian Coasts press with an inequality amounting to injustice on the Revenues of Tasmania.

At present the Light-houses are supported by contributions from the Colonies of South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales, and Tasmania, in a manner which makes the charge upon the Revenue of each Colony out of all proportion to the amount of its population, and the extent of its commerce. A more equitable arrangement would apportion the charge for Light Houses to each Colony in the ratio of its shipping and commerce deriving advantages from these Institutions.

The Delegates will propose to the Conference that these Establishments shall, for the future, be supported by the contributing Colonies on the same basis as that adopted for calculating the quota payable by each Colony for the maintenance of Postal Communication with England ; and that the proportion thus chargeable to each Colony should be periodically ascertained, and adjusted, in accordance with the annual official Statistics of their commerce and shipping.

It may be suggested that there will be no difficulty or unfairness in this plan, inasmuch as the Light Dues are now raised, throughout the Colonies, by a tonnage charge upon all shipping entered at their respective Custom Houses.

The Delegates from Tasmania will have accomplished a practical success, and a tangible advantage to the country, should they procure the re-adjustment of these charges on the principles of the basis now suggested. The Tasmanian contribution to the Light-house Fund is now largely disproportioned to her beneficiary usufruct of the Light-houses ; and a reduction of the charge would be felt by Parliament as the remedy of an injustice, and a recovery of misspent Revenue.

The Government feel that it would be superfluous to impress upon the Tasmanian Delegates the propriety, under these circumstances, of urging temperately, but firmly, upon the consideration of the Conference the claims of this Colony to be relieved from the present unequal incidence of this contribution for the support of Light-houses.

COURT OF APPELLATE JURISDICTION.

The subject of an Australian Court of Appellate Judicature may not improbably be mooted at the approaching Conference.

As this is a question which can only be dealt with in the way of suggestive enquiry or speculative discussion, and as no practical result can follow the deliberations on this head of such a Body as the Conference, my Government feel it unnecessary to furnish the Delegates with detailed instructions on a matter which, under any circumstances, would require the interposition of an Act of the Imperial Parliament to give it legal consistency and effect.

The subject, however, is one of unquestionable interest and importance to every Australian Colony. The Delegates from Tasmania will, therefore, do well to raise the question for discussion, should this topic not be suggested from any other quarter ; and to lose no opportunity of ascertaining how the matter is regarded by other Delegates, and by the Governments and Public of the Continental Colonies.

The Delegates will carefully refrain from pledging the Tasmanian Government in any way on this point ; but they may intimate that, at present, my Responsible Advisers, while admitting the many possible advantages of the establishment of a Common Court of Supreme Appellate Jurisdiction for the Australian Colonies, are scarcely prepared to invite Parliament to concur in any measure which would deprive the inhabitants of Tasmania of the advantage they now enjoy, in the right of appeal from the decisions of Provincial Tribunals to the Supreme and Final Judicature of Her Majesty's Privy Council.

But it is unnecessary to dwell at greater length on this interesting and important subject, as the circumstances under which the Conference will assemble preclude the possibility of a question of this moment and magnitude being adequately discussed.

FEDERATION.

For the same reason the Government abstains from furnishing the Delegates with definite or extended instructions on the question of Australian Federation.

It will be the duty of the Tasmanian Delegates to seek, rather than to impart, information on this point.

At this the First Meeting of Australian Delegates in a Conference on Political and Commercial questions affecting the Colonies, at once, as a collective whole, and as individual Members of one of the largest and most important groups of British Colonial Possessions, it is scarcely possible that the question of Federation should not occupy the discussions, as it cannot fail to engage the attention, of the Members of the Conference.

Tasmania has many advantages to gain from the establishment of Federal action in Australia, while she is fortunately able to approach the question undisturbed by the sentiment of jealous rivalry, which is almost certain to enbitter, and possibly impede, its discussion between her wealthy and more powerful neighbours, Victoria and New South Wales.

My Government desires that the Tasmanian Delegates should devote especial attention to ascertaining what may be considered the real views, on this question, of the Governments of the other Colonies represented at the Conference.

The question itself can receive no practical solution on the present occasion; but much useful information may be elicited, to be turned hereafter to beneficial account, when the future development of Australian Colonisation shall have tended to equalise the weight and influence, at similar Conferences, of the great Colonies now jealously contending for metropolitan consideration.

In conclusion, the Government of Tasmania desires to impress upon its Delegates at the Australian Conference the propriety of never losing sight of the interests of this Colony, in their deliberations on subjects affecting the general welfare of the whole Australian Group.

At the same time, the Delegates will bear in mind that they will come before the first Australian Conference in the honourable character of the Representatives of the Executive Government, and of the Legislature and People, of Tasmania.

While, therefore, it will be their duty to study on all occasions the interest and advantage of the great constituency it is their privilege to represent, they will aim at maintaining the character of the Colony as a liberal and enlightened community; prepared to assert, at all times, its right to a co-ordinate voice in the determination of questions affecting the general interests of Australia; and ready, in the spirit of unselfish patriotism, which has so long characterised its public action on matters of National concern, to consent to such reasonable sacrifices of its individual advantage as may, at any time, be legitimately required for the advancement of the common good of the political aggregate of which it is proud to be a constituent unit.

My Responsible Advisers feel that it would be entirely unnecessary to remind the Tasmanian Delegates of the duty of sustaining, in their intercourse with the Delegates from the other Colonies, the high character for loyalty to Her Most Gracious Majesty's Throne and Person, and devotion to British connection and Polity, which has always been the honourable distinction of the Legislature and People of Tasmania.

T. GORE BROWNE.
19th March, 1863.

By His Excellency's Command,
JAMES WHYTE, *Colonial Secretary.*

REPORT of the Proceedings of the Inter-Colonial Conference assembled in Melbourne in the Months of March and April, 1863.

THE suggestion that an Inter-Colonial Conference should be held at which Delegates from the various Colonies of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia, Tasmania, and Queensland should assemble, in order to consider the possibility of adopting a uniform Tariff, was made by His Excellency Sir Dominick Daly, Governor of South Australia. Circumstances interfered to prevent the Conference from assembling until the present year, when Representatives duly appointed by their respective Governments attended on behalf of all these Colonies, with the exception of Western Australia and Queensland.

The reasons urged by those Colonies for not sending Delegates are stated in the letters from the Colonial Secretary of Western Australia, and the Principal Under-Secretary of Queensland.

The Delegates so appointed, and who appeared on behalf of their respective Governments, were—

New South Wales.	{	Hon. Charles Cooper, <i>M.P.</i> , <i>Colonial Secretary.</i>
		Hon. Thos. W. Smart, <i>Treasurer.</i>
		E. C. Weekes, Esq., <i>M.P.</i>
Victoria	{	Hon. John O'Shanassy, <i>M.L.A.</i> , <i>Chief Secretary.</i>
		Hon. William Haines, <i>M.L.A.</i> , <i>Treasurer.</i>
		Hon. Robert Anderson, <i>M.L.A.</i> , <i>Commissioner of Trade and Customs.</i>
South Australia ..	{	Hon. Arthur Blyth, <i>M.P.</i> , <i>Treasurer.</i>
		Hon. Henry Ayers, <i>M.L.C.</i>
		Lavington Glyde, Esq., <i>M.P.</i>
Tasmania.....	{	Hon. Charles Meredith, <i>M.H.A.</i> , <i>Treasurer.</i>
		Hon. William Carter, <i>M.L.C.</i>
		Adye Douglas, Esq., <i>M.H.A.</i>

The Executive Council Chamber, Melbourne, was appropriated by the Government of Victoria for the Sittings of the Conference; and a Preliminary Meeting, at which all the Delegates were present, was held there on Thursday, the 26th of March, when it was determined that the Election of a Chairman was unnecessary; and that, as one of the main objects of the Conference would be defeated by premature publicity, the proceedings should not be open to the Public, but that the results only should be communicated.

The first formal Meeting took place on the following day, and the Sittings extended to the 13th day of April.

The subjects discussed were—

- First. The Tariff and questions of a kindred character, including Drawbacks and *Ad Valorem* Duties.
- Secondly. Inland Inter-colonial Customs' Duties and their distribution.
- Thirdly. Transportation from the United Kingdom to Australian Possessions.
- Fourthly. A permanent Immigration Fund to be provided by Act by each Colony upon an equitable basis.
- Fifthly. Improvement of Internal Rivers for purposes of navigation and irrigation.
- Sixthly. Coast Light-houses and other Maritime questions affecting the Shipping interest.
- Seventhly. Fortnightly Ocean Postal Communication.
- Eighthly. Anglo-Australian and China Telegraph.
- Ninthly. Legal questions; including the Law of Bankruptcy, of Patents, of Joint Stock Companies, of Probates and Letters of Administration, and a Court of Appeal for the Australian Colonies.
- Tenthly. A uniform system of Weights and Measures.

Upon these subjects the following Resolutions were passed :—

1. On the Tariff and kindred subjects :—

That this Conference deems it desirable to settle the basis of a Uniform Tariff for the Australian Colonies, and also for Tasmania.

That the Articles to be rendered subject to Duties should now be discussed.

That this Conference is of opinion that the *Ad Valorem* mode of levying Duties upon Goods is open to so many objections that it ought not to be resorted to.

That the following Tariff be adopted by this Conference ; viz.—

Imported Spirits	10s. per gallon.	Cigars and Snuff	4s. per lb.
Wine*—		Tea	6d. per lb.
In wood	2s. per gallon.	Sugar—	
In bottle, reputed quarts	8s. per dozen.	Refined and candy	7s. per cwt.
In bottle, reputed pints	4s. per dozen.	Unrefined	5s. 6d. per cwt.
Ale, Porter, and Beer—		Molasses and Treacle	3s. 6d. per cwt.
In wood	6d. per gallon.	Coffee, Chicory, Cocoa, and Chocolate	3d. per lb.
In bottle, reputed quarts	1s. per dozen.	Opium—	
In bottle, reputed pints	6d. per dozen.	Manufactured	20s. per lb.
Malt	6d. per bushel.	Unmanufactured	10s. per lb.
Hops	3d. per lb.	Rice	4s. per cwt.
Tobacco—		Dried Fruits, Nuts, and Almonds	10s. per cwt.
Manufactured	2s. per lb.	Candles	1d. per lb.
Unmanufactured	1s. per lb.	Oils (see definition)	6d. per gallon.
Sheepwash	3d. per lb.	Salt	40s. per ton.

The term "Oils" shall mean all oils, whether of natural or artificial origin, and fluids used for lighting or burning purposes.

That the Members of this Conference undertake to urge upon their respective Parliaments the adoption of such Tariff.

That, in the opinion of this Conference, the Tariff which has been agreed upon, after the fullest deliberation, ought not to be altered by any one Colony, nor until after proposed alterations shall have been considered in a future Conference.

That Drawbacks be allowed on the following Articles ; viz.—

Wine.	Sugar.	Cocoa.
Hops.	Coffee.	Chocolate.
Tea.	Chicory.	Rice.

And that the following Articles be left open for further consideration ; viz.—

Ale.	Porter.	Beer.
Candles.	Oils.	

2. On Inter-Colonial Customs' Duties, and their distribution :—

That, in the opinion of this Conference, Customs' Duties ought to be paid to the Revenues of those Colonies by whose population the Dutiable Goods are consumed.

That the Conference is of opinion that the Colonies of New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia ought to co-operate with each other to secure to each Colony the Revenue to which it is legally entitled ; either by the distribution of the Customs' Revenues collected by all at stated periods rateably according to their population, or by some other mode which may be considered equitable and practicable.

3. On Transportation :—

That this Conference address Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen, praying that Transportation may not be established or continued in any portion of Her Majesty's Australian Dependencies.

That a Committee, consisting of Messrs. Cowper, O'Shanassy, Meredith, and the Mover (Mr. Blyth), be appointed to prepare the Address.

That this Address be adopted ; viz.—

To Her Most Gracious Majesty the QUEEN.

WE, Your Majesty's loyal and dutiful subjects the Delegates appointed by the respective Governments of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania to consider matters of common interest, in Conference assembled, beg leave to approach Your Majesty with assurances of our attachment to Your Majesty's Person and Government.

We humbly assure Your Majesty that the appointment of a Royal Commission to enquire into the subject of Transportation from the United Kingdom has filled the inhabitants of the Australian Colonies with alarm, under an apprehension that some portion of Your Majesty's Australian possessions may be selected as a site for a new Penal Settlement.

We desire to impress upon Your Majesty that Transportation to any part of Australia, whether settled or not, would practically be Transportation to those Colonies now existing ; would be regarded as a breach of faith, more especially by the large numbers of Your Majesty's subjects who have settled in Australia since Transportation was discontinued ; would impede the current of free immigration, seriously affect the moral welfare of the people, and cause a large increase in the expenses of the several Governments.

We venture humbly to remind Your Majesty that we have already had experience of the injurious effects produced by Transportation, and that the result of that experience was communicated to Your

* If not containing more than twenty-five per cent. of alcohol.

Majesty in Addresses and Petitions from Your Majesty's loyal subjects in these Colonies. That, in compliance with the prayer of those remonstrances, Your Majesty was graciously pleased to cause the discontinuance of the system then in existence, and the Colonists were consequently led to believe that no proposal for its re-establishment would ever be entertained.

We desire humbly to inform Your Majesty that if the Report of the Royal Commission should recommend the revival of Transportation to Australia, and if that recommendation should unhappily be adopted, the utmost dissatisfaction would be felt throughout the whole group of these Colonies, now flourishing and contented, and the strong feeling of loyalty, which now so universally prevails, would be materially weakened.

We humbly implore Your Majesty to refuse Your Majesty's sanction to any proposal for reviving Transportation to any part of Your Majesty's Australian possessions; and we also entreat that Your Majesty will be pleased to direct that, as early as possible, the Transportation of Convicts from the United Kingdom to Western Australia should cease, as daily experience proves that the existence of a Penal Settlement there inflicts much injury upon these Colonies.

We desire humbly to assure Your Majesty, that, in acceding to the prayer of the Petitions which were formerly addressed to Your Majesty, and in the establishment of that enlightened policy which has been of late years manifested towards these Colonies, Your Majesty has strengthened in a high degree those feelings of dutiful attachment which it is our anxious and earnest wish should be maintained; and in appealing on this important occasion to Your Majesty, we humbly beseech Your Majesty to prevent the infliction of so deadly a blow to the welfare and happiness of these Colonies, and to their moral and social progress.

That four copies of the Address be engrossed for transmission to Her Majesty; and that a copy be presented by the Delegates of the several Colonies to each Governor, respectfully requesting that he will be pleased to transmit it.

4. On Immigration:—

That, in the opinion of this Conference, it is of the highest importance to the prosperity and future greatness of Australia that a healthy flow of Immigration should be encouraged and promoted from the United Kingdom chiefly; and, as permanent legal appropriation for the accomplishment of this object has been made already by some of the local Legislatures, by devoting a fixed proportion of the Revenues derivable from the alienation of the Public Lands, it is but just, in pursuance of a common interest, that similar provision should be made on an equitable basis, such as Population and Revenue, by all the Legislatures respectively.

That, when such arrangements have been perfected, the decision already come to by this Conference in relation to any Tariff should apply with equal force and justice to any proposed alteration affecting the legal provision for promoting Immigration; viz.—That an Inter-Colonial Conference be called to consider the subject before any legislation is proposed by the respective Governments.

5. On Improvements to the Rivers in the Interior:—

That, in the opinion of this Conference, the commerce, population, and wealth of Australia can be largely increased by rendering navigable and otherwise utilising the great rivers of the interior, such as the Murray, Edward, Murrumbidgee, and Darling; and that the obligation of carrying into effect the necessary works to accomplish these objects devolves primarily upon the respective Governments having jurisdiction over such rivers.

6. On Light-houses and Maritime subjects:—

That this Conference is of opinion that Legislative action should be taken by the Colonies here represented for the following purposes:—

- (1.) To prohibit any Vessel proceeding to sea from any Port in the Colonies which is not under command of a Master holding a Certificate of competency.
- (2.) That certificates granted by competent authority in the United Kingdom, or in any of the Colonies aforesaid, to any person authorising such person to hold the appointment of Master, Mate, or Engineer of any Vessel, be held to be in force within the said Colonies without further examination or the payment of additional fees.
- (3.) That the qualifications and mode of conducting the examinations prescribed by the Board of Trade for Masters, Mates, and Engineers be adopted, so far as practicable, by the said Colonies.
- (4.) That a Certificate granted by competent authority to any Steam Vessel, authorising such Vessel to ply for a stated period, be held to be in force within all the said Colonies without further survey or fees being required.
- (5.) That uniform provision be made in the said Colonies upon the following subjects:—
 - A. Salvage.
 - B. Buoyage, including Tidal and Bar-harbour Signals, and Land and Sea Marks.
 - C. The management of Life Boats, and the preservation of persons from Shipwreck.
- (6.) That in the opinion of this Conference, the system of maintaining Coast Light-houses, established in consequence of the Report of the Commissioners appointed in the year 1856, should be reconsidered; and that a joint Commission should be appointed, by united action on the part of the respective Governments represented at this Conference, to consider and report upon the entire subject.

7. On a Fortnightly Postal Communication with England :—

That, in the opinion of the Conference, it is inexpedient to consider the proposal for the adoption of a Fortnightly Postal Service with the United Kingdom by way of Suez in the present state of the question.

8. On Electric Telegraphic Communication with England :—

That, in the opinion of this Conference, it is not expedient at present to discuss the proposals brought under consideration with reference to the proposed Anglo-Australian, India, and China Electric Telegraph.

9. On Legal Questions :—

That in the opinion of this Conference it is desirable that Legislative action be taken in order that Probates and Letters of Administration granted in one Colony should, upon registration, be valid in any other.

That it is desirable the Bankruptcy Laws of the various Colonies should be assimilated; and that provision should be made, in any enactment on Bankruptcy, for each Colony to have power to apprehend Debtors and Bankrupts absconding from any other Colony.

That it is desirable that Legislative action be taken with a view to Letters Patent granted in one Colony being made valid in any other upon being registered there.

That it is desirable that Legislative action be taken with the view that any Incorporated Company in one Colony may have power to sue and be sued in any other Colony upon a proper registration being effected.

10. On a uniform system of Weights and Measures :—

That it is desirable a uniform system of Weights and Measures should prevail throughout the Australian Colonies.

The subject of Federation of the Australian Colonies was not taken into consideration by the Conference; for, although the question has, during some years, occupied the attention of several of the Legislatures, the Delegates had no instructions in the matter, and it did not seem probable that its discussion at present would be attended with any benefit.

Considering the number and importance of the questions discussed, it is gratifying that so much unanimity prevailed respecting them; and the Conference venture to hope that their labors will tend to cement the feeling of friendly intercourse in respect to Trade and Commerce which has hitherto existed, and that they will be otherwise productive of beneficial results to all the Australian Colonies.

A Copy of the Minutes of Proceedings is attached to this Report.

(Signed)

Delegates from New South Wales.. { CHARLES COWPER, *Colonial Secretary of N. S. Wales.*
T. W. SMART, *Colonial Treasurer of N. S. Wales.*
E. C. WEEKES, *M.H.A.*

Delegates from Victoria..... { JOHN O'SHANASSY, *Chief Secretary, Victoria.*
WILLIAM C. HAINES, *Treasurer, Victoria.*

Delegates from South Australia... { ARTHUR BLYTH, *Treasurer.*
HENRY AYERS, *M.L.C.*
LAV. GLYDE, *M.P.*

Delegates from Tasmania .. { CHARLES MEREDITH, *Treasurer of Tasmania.*
WM. CARTER, *M.L.C.*
ADYE DOUGLAS, *M.H.A.*

THE CONFERENCE TARIFF.

LAST night Mr. Haines laid on the table of the Legislative Assembly a sealed packet containing the Tariff proposed by the Conference. It was opened by the Speaker, and the document it contained was laid on the table. It is dated "Wednesday, 1st April, 1863," and is as follows:—

Resolved, That the following Tariff be adopted by this Conference; viz.—

Imported Spirits	10s. per gallon.	Cigars and Snuff	4s. per lb.
Wine*—		Tea	6d. per lb.
In wood	2s. per gallon.	Sugar—	
In bottle, reputed quarts	8s. per dozen.	Refined and candy	7s. per cwt.
In bottle, reputed pints	4s. per dozen.	Unrefined	5s. 6d. per cwt.
Ale, Porter, and Beer—		Molasses and Treacle	3s. 6d. per cwt.
In wood	6d. per gallon.	Coffee, Chicory, Cocoa, and Chocolate	3d. per lb.
In bottle, reputed quarts	1s. per dozen.	Opium—	
In bottle, reputed pints	6d. per dozen.	Manufactured	20s. per lb.
Malt	6d. per bushel.	Unmanufactured	10s. per lb.
Hops	3d. per lb.	Rice	4s. per cwt.
Tobacco—		Dried Fruits, Nuts, and Almonds	10s. per cwt.
Manufactured	2s. per lb.	Candles	1d. per lb.
Unmanufactured	1s. per lb.	Oils (see definition)	6d. per gallon.
Sheepwash	3d. per lb.	Salt	40s. per ton.

The term "Oils" shall mean all oils, whether of natural or artificial origin, and fluids used for lighting or burning purposes.

* If not containing more than twenty-five per cent. of alcohol.

T. W. SMART, *N.S.W.*
WILLIAM C. HAINES, *Victoria.*
ARTHUR BLYTH, *South Australia.*
CHARLES MEREDITH, *Tasmania.*

(Except Tobacco.)
ROBERT S. ANDERSON.

Mr. Anderson moved—"That drawbacks be allowed on the following articles; viz.—Wine, hops, tea, sugar, coffee, chicory, cocoa, chocolate, and rice; and that the following articles be left open for further consideration, viz.—Ale, porter, beer, candles, oils." Carried.

T. W. SMART.
WILLIAM C. HAINES, *Victoria.*
ARTHUR BLYTH, *South Australia.*
CHARLES MEREDITH, *Tasmania.*

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS.

FRIDAY, MARCH 27.

A first formal Meeting of the Inter-Colonial Conference was held in the Executive Council Chamber, at 12 o'clock, all the Members being present; namely—[Here follow the names of the Delegates.]

Resolved, "That all the Correspondence and Telegrams that have passed between the various Governments on the subject of the Conference be entered in the Minutes, and appended to the Report of the Conference."

Mr. Cowper gave notice of the following Resolutions; viz.—

"1. That Customs' Duties ought to be paid to the Revenues of those Colonies by whose population the dutiable goods are consumed.

"2. That, with a view to the effectual carrying out of this principle, a uniform Tariff be adopted by all the Colonies having common boundaries, and the revenue collected by all at stated periods divided rateably, and paid over to each according to population.

"3. That this Conference is of opinion that the *ad valorem* mode of levying duties upon goods is open to so many objections that it ought not to be resorted to."

The Conference deliberated.

It was then moved by Mr. O'Shanassy—

"1. That this Conference deems it desirable to settle the basis of a uniform Tariff for the Australian Colonies, and also for Tasmania.

"2. That the articles to be rendered subject to duties should now be discussed." Carried.

The Conference further deliberated, and adjourned until the following day at Twelve o'clock.

(Signed) THOMAS WEBB WARE, *Secretary.*

SATURDAY, MARCH 28.

The Conference met at Twelve o'clock. Present, all the Members.

The Minutes of the previous day were read and confirmed.

The Conference deliberated on the proposed Tariff.

Mr. Blyth gave notice that, on a future day, he would bring under the consideration of the Conference the importance of his expressing an opinion against transportation to any part of Australia.

Mr. Meredith brought forward the subject of Light-houses, and handed in certain documents, which were ordered to be printed.

The Conference adjourned until Monday, at Twelve o'clock.

MONDAY, MARCH 30.

The Conference met at Twelve o'clock. Present, all the Members.

The Minutes of the previous Meeting were read and confirmed.

Mr. Meredith gave notice of a Resolution to the effect that the several Governments represented by the Conference should contribute towards the expenses of the Light-houses in Banks' Straits.

Mr. Cowper moved, "That this Conference is of opinion that the *ad valorem* mode of levying duties upon goods is open to so many objections that it ought not to be resorted to."

The Conference deliberated. Motion carried; Mr. Blyth and Mr. Glyde dissenting.

The Conference adjourned until the usual hour on Tuesday.

TUESDAY, MARCH 31.

The Conference met at Twelve o'clock. Present, all the Members.

The Minutes of the previous day were read and confirmed.

The Conference further deliberated on the proposed Tariff, and adjourned until the usual hour on the following day.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1.

The Conference met at Twelve o'clock. Present, all the Members.

The Minutes of the previous day were read and confirmed.

The Conference further deliberated on the Tariff, and resolved—"That the following Tariff be adopted by this Conference; viz.—" Carried.

[The Schedule of Tariff handed to the respective Treasurers of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania, to be kept in sealed envelopes until required for Parliamentary discussion.]

It was then resolved—

"1. That the Members of this Conference undertake to urge upon their respective Parliaments the adoption of such Tariff.

"2. That, in the opinion of this Conference, the Tariff which has been agreed upon after the fullest deliberation ought not to be altered by any one Colony, nor until after proposed alterations shall have been considered in a future Conference."

The Conference then deliberated upon the question of Drawbacks, and adjourned until the usual hour on Thursday.

THURSDAY, APRIL 2.

The Conference met at Twelve o'clock.

Present—All the Members, with the exception of Mr. Haines.

The previous Minutes having been confirmed, the Conference further deliberated on Drawbacks.

Mr. Anderson moved—"That Drawbacks be allowed on the following articles; namely—" Carried.

[The Schedule of Articles on which Drawbacks are to be allowed handed to the respective Treasurers of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania, to be kept in sealed envelopes until required for Parliamentary discussion.]

Mr. Cowper then moved—"That in the opinion of this Conference Customs' Duties ought to be paid to the Revenues of those Colonies by whose population the dutiable goods are consumed."

On the Question being put, there appeared—For the Resolution, Messrs. Cowper, Smart, Weekes, Glyde, Ayers, Blyth, and Douglas—Against it, Messrs. O'Shanassy and Anderson. Carried.

Mr. Meredith and Mr. Carter declined to vote, and Mr. Haines did not enter the room until a later period of the day.

Mr. O'Shanassy asked for and obtained the permission of the Conference to place on the Minutes:—

1. A copy of a Letter from the Acting Colonial Secretary of New South Wales to the Colonial Secretary of Victoria, dated 12th September, 1855.

2. A copy of Governor Sir Charles Hotham's proclamation, dated the 29th October, in the same year; as indicating the views then and now entertained by the Government of Victoria on the subject of Murray River Customs' Duties.

Mr. Anderson gave notice of Resolutions for establishing uniformity of system in respect to Certificates to Masters of Vessels, and other matters connected with the Shipping interest.

The Conference adjourned until the usual hour on Tuesday, the 7th instant.

TUESDAY, APRIL 7.

The Conference met at Twelve o'clock.

Present—All the Members excepting Mr. Carter.

The Minutes of the previous Meeting were read and confirmed.

Mr. Anderson moved—"That this Conference is of opinion that Legislative action should be taken by each of the Colonies here represented for the following purposes :—

1. To prohibit any Vessel proceeding to sea from any Port in the Colonies which is not under command of a Master holding a Certificate of competency.
2. That Certificates granted by competent authority in the United Kingdom, or in any of the Colonies aforesaid, to any person, authorising such person to hold the appointment of Master, Mate, or Engineer of any Vessel be held to be in force within the said Colonies without further examination or the payment of additional fees.
3. That the qualifications and mode of conducting the Examinations prescribed by the Board of Trade for Masters, Mates, and Engineers be adopted so far as practicable by the said Colonies.
4. That a Certificate granted by competent authority to any Steam Vessel, authorising such Vessel to ply for a stated period, be held to be in force within all the said Colonies without further survey or fees being required.
5. That uniform provision be made upon the following subjects:—
 - a. Salvage.
 - b. Buoyage, including Tidal and Bar Harbour Signals, and Land and Sea Marks.
 - c. The Management of Life-boats, and the preservation of Persons from Shipwreck." Carried.

Mr. Meredith moved—"That the Light-houses in Banks' Straits—viz., Goose Island and Swan Island—are now exclusively maintained by the Colony of Tasmania; and One-third of the expense of Kent's Group Light-house, and One-fourth that of King's Island Light-house, are paid by the same Colony. That such expenditure is disproportioned to the advantages derived by the said Colony from the said Light-houses, as compared with the amount paid and the benefit derived from such Light-houses by the other Colonies represented at this Conference. *Resolved*—That the said Light-houses be maintained at the joint expense of the Colonies represented at this Conference, in proportion to the Tonnage of each Colony deriving benefit from said Light-houses; and that a Commission be appointed by each Colony, in order to settle and adjust the amount to be paid by the respective Governments to the Government of Tasmania, for the support and maintenance of the said Light-houses."

Mr. Cowper proposed the following amendment—"That, in the opinion of this Conference, the system of maintaining coast lighthouses, established in consequence of the report of the Commission appointed in the year 1856, should be reconsidered; and that a Joint Commission should be appointed by united action on the part of the respective Governments of the Colonies represented at this Conference, to consider and report generally upon the entire subject." Carried.

Mr. Blyth then moved—

- "1. That this Conference address Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen, praying that Transportation may not be established or continued in any portion of Her Majesty's Australian Dependencies.
- "2. That a Committee, consisting of Messrs. Cowper, O'Shanassy, Meredith, and the Mover, be appointed to prepare the Address. Carried.

Mr. Cowper gave notice, that, on a future day, he would move a Resolution on Electric Telegraphic Communication with England.

Mr. O'Shanassy gave notice of a Resolution affirming the importance of utilizing the great Rivers in the Interior, and expressive of the opinion of the Conference, that the necessary works should be undertaken at the charge of the Governments having jurisdiction over them.

The Conference deliberated upon Postal Communication with England, and the establishment of a Court of Appeal; and adjourned until the next day at the usual hour.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8.

The Conference met at Twelve o'clock. Present all the Members.

The Minutes of the previous day were read and confirmed.

The Committee appointed to prepare the Address to the Queen brought up a draft. Address read. Conference deliberated, and adjourned the further consideration of it until the following day.

Mr. O'Shanassy gave notice of a Resolution in favour of Immigration.

Mr. Blyth gave notice of a Resolution for establishing a uniform system of Weights and Measures.

The Conference adjourned until Eleven o'clock the next day.

THURSDAY, APRIL 9.

The Conference met at Eleven o'clock. Present all the Members.

The Minutes of the previous day were read and confirmed.

The Conference considered the Address to the Queen clause by clause.

Resolved, "That this Address be adopted."

[Here follows the Petition.]

Resolved, "That four copies of the Address be engrossed for transmission to Her Majesty, and that a copy be presented by the Delegates of the several Colonies to each Governor, respectfully requesting that he will be pleased to transmit it."

Mr. O'Shanassy then moved, "That, in the opinion of this Conference, the commerce, population, and wealth of Australia can be largely increased by rendering navigable, and otherwise utilising, the great Rivers of the interior, such as the Murray, Edward, Murrumbidgee, and Darling, and that the obligation of carrying into effect the necessary works to accomplish these objects devolves primarily upon the respective Governments having jurisdiction over such Rivers." Carried.

Mr. Cowper gave notice of his intention of moving a Resolution for securing to each Colony the Revenue to which it is legally entitled.

Mr. O'Shanassy moved, pursuant to notice,—“ 1. That, in the opinion of this Conference, it is of the highest importance to the prosperity and future greatness of Australia that a healthy flow of Immigration should be encouraged and promoted from the United Kingdom chiefly. And as permanent legal appropriation for the accomplishment of this object has been made already by some of the local Legislatures, by devoting a fixed proportion of the Revenues derivable from the alienation of the public lands, it is but just, in pursuance of a common interest, that similar provision should be made on an equitable basis, such as population and revenue, by all the Legislatures respectively.

“ 2. That, when such arrangements have been perfected, the decision already come to by this Conference in relation to any alteration in the Tariff should apply with equal force and justice to any proposed alteration affecting the legal provision for promoting Immigration; viz., that an Intercolonial Conference be called to consider the subject before any legislation is proposed by the respective Governments.” Carried.

Moved by Mr. O'Shanassy, “That, in the opinion of this Conference, it is desirable that Legislative action be taken in order that probates and letters of administration granted in one Colony should, upon registration, be valid in any other.” Carried.

“That it is desirable that the Bankruptcy Laws of the various Colonies should be assimilated; and that provision should be made in any enactment on bankruptcy for each Colony to have power to apprehend debtors and bankrupts absconding from any other Colony.” Carried.

“That it is desirable that Legislative action be taken with a view to Letters Patent granted in one Colony being made valid in any other upon being registered there.” Carried.

Moved by Mr. Douglas, “That it is desirable that Legislative action be taken in order that any incorporated company in one Colony may have power to sue and be sued in any other Colony upon a proper registration being effected.” Carried.

Moved by Mr. Blyth, “That it is desirable a uniform system of Weights and Measures should prevail throughout the Australian Colonies.” Carried.

At the instance of Mr. Ayers, the Conference resumed the consideration of the question of establishing a General Court of Appeal for the Australian colonies. The system in force in South Australia being at variance with that in operation in the remainder of the Colonies, where the appeal to the Privy Council is direct from the Supreme Court, and, in the opinion of the majority of the members of the Conference, has been found to work satisfactorily, it was finally decided that South Australia should legislate solely on the matter.

Mr. Cowper brought under consideration the question of Telegraphic communication with England. The Conference deliberated.

Mr. Anderson moved, “That, in the opinion of this Conference, it is not expedient at present to discuss the proposals brought under consideration with reference to the Anglo-Australian, India, and China Electric Telegraph.” Carried.

The Conference adjourned until the next day at eleven o'clock.

FRIDAY, APRIL 10.

The Conference met at eleven o'clock. All the members present.

The minutes of the previous day were read and confirmed.

Mr. Cowper moved, “That this Conference is of opinion that the Colonies of New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia ought to co-operate with each other to secure to each colony the revenue to which it is legally entitled, either by the distribution of the Customs revenue collected by all at stated periods, rateably according to their population, or by some other mode which may be considered equitable and practicable.”

Mr. Anderson moved the addition of the following words as an Amendment:—“Such as the assimilation of the Tariffs of the said Colonies, as now agreed upon, which would, upon being enforced, obviate all difficulties respecting border Customs, by having a system of internal free trade, whether borne along or across the River Murray.”

On the question being put, there appeared for the original motion—Messrs. Cowper, Smart, Weekes, Blyth, Ayres, Glyde, and Douglas. For the amendment—Messrs. O'Shanassy, Anderson, and Haines.

Mr. Carter declined to vote, and Mr. Meredith was absent.

Mr. Blyth moved, “That, in the opinion of the Conference, it is inexpedient to consider the proposal for the adoption of a Fortnightly Postal Service with the United Kingdom by way of Suez, in the present state of the question.” Carried.

Mr. Carter handed in a paper explaining why he did not sign the Anti-transportation Address to Her Majesty. Mr. Carter declined to sign the address unless the following alterations were made in it:—paragraph three, sixth line, strike out “moral;” paragraph four, second line, strike out “injurious;” paragraph seven, after “maintained,” strike out all that remains.

Mr. Glyde then moved, “That Messrs. Cowper, O'Shanassy, Blyth, and Meredith, be a Committee to prepare a draft report of the proceedings of the Conference.” Carried.

The Conference adjourned until eleven o'clock the next day.

SATURDAY, APRIL 11.

The Conference met at Eleven o'clock. Present, all the Members excepting Mr. O'Shanassy, Mr. Anderson, Mr. Douglas, and Mr. Carter.

The Minutes of the previous day were read and confirmed,

The Committee brought up a Draft Report of the proceedings of the Conference, which was considered.

The Conference adjourned until Monday next, at Ten o'clock.

MONDAY, APRIL 13.

The Conference met at Ten o'clock. Present, all the Members excepting Mr. Anderson.

The Minutes of the previous Meeting were read and confirmed.

Resolved, "That the report of the proceedings of the Conference brought up be adopted, and signed in quadruplicate by the Members of the Conference."

Resolved, "That the Secretary prepare in quadruplicate a Schedule containing the Tariff and the list of the articles on which Drawbacks are to be allowed; and that the Treasurers present do affix their signatures to such Schedules, and each take one Schedule, to be kept in a sealed envelope until required for Parliamentary discussion."

Mr. Blyth moved, "That Tuesday, the 2nd June, at half-past Four o'clock, be fixed as the day and hour for bringing forward the amended Tariff question in all the Colonies." Carried.

The Delegates from New South Wales wish to place on record, that, in signing the Report of the Proceedings of the Conference, they reserve the option of not proposing the Tariff to Parliament if the Government of Victoria finally refuses to make any arrangement with the Government of New South Wales respecting the border Customs Duties.

We certify that these Minutes are correct.

(Signed) JOHN O'SHANASSY, *Chief Secretary of Victoria*,
CHARLES MEREDITH.
CHARLES COWPER.
ARTHUR BLYTH.

A true Copy.—THOMAS WEBB WARE, *Secretary*.

A P P E N D I X.

INTER-COLONIAL CONFERENCE.—EXTRACTS FROM CORRESPONDENCE AND TELEGRAMS.

Chief Secretary of South Australia to Chief Secretary of Victoria.

Chief Secretary's Office, Adelaide, 18th March, 1862.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor, by desire of His Excellency Sir Dominick Daly, to request that you will call the attention of the Government of Victoria to the fact that the existence of different Tariffs in adjoining Colonies, and the systematic treatment of each Colony by its neighbour as though it were a Foreign State, are gradually creating, and must continue to excite, feelings between the Inhabitants of the several Colonies scarcely in accordance with the unity of their origin, and which may eventually render impossible that federation which all look forward to as ultimately desirable.

2. As the populations of the Colonies press closer to each other, through the extended occupation of the country, the erection of frontier Custom-houses, which will be necessitated by the diverse Tariffs, will have the effect of checking freedom of intercourse, and will perpetuate and embitter the most undesirable state of feeling above alluded to.

3. Until the means of communication are much improved, probably matters will not ripen sufficiently to allow of complete federation; but meanwhile it appears to this Government that much may be done towards creating a more cordial feeling, and preparing the way for a future federal union.

4. As one step towards attaining this desirable end, this Government intend seeking Legislative authority to receive free of duty all articles *bona fide* the produce of any other Australian colony which is willing, on the same terms, to receive the produce of this; and they trust that the Government of Victoria will deem it desirable to adopt the same policy with reference to South Australia and the other Colonies.

5. This Government would, at the same time, bring under your notice the desirableness of steps being taken in order to place the Tariffs in this and the adjacent Colonies on a uniform basis. So long as they remain essentially different, it will be impossible for the Colony with the higher Tariff to prevent the introduction of goods that have paid duty under a lower one, unless a large and costly revenue service be maintained.

6. It was this consideration that, two years ago, mainly induced the Parliament of this province to repeal the then existing *ad valorem* duties. Since then, if I am not misinformed as to the state of public feeling elsewhere, the necessity for a greater Customs Revenue seems to have been felt in all the Australian Colonies; and it appears likely that a similar reason to that which principally led to the abolition of *ad valorem* duties here is now operating in other Colonies to prevent their imposition.

7. Under these considerations, it seems desirable that steps should be taken to ascertain whether it be not possible for the several Australian Colonies to agree upon a uniform Tariff. The necessity for this will be more apparent when I state that the natural adaptedness of this Colony to the culture of the vine, and the extent to which this interest is being developed, are facts hurrying us towards free distillation—the restrictions upon which cannot be, and this Government would be extremely sorry to see, much longer continued.

8. I need scarcely observe that free distillation in South Australia, with high duties on spirits in adjacent Colonies, would at once necessitate upon their Governments the establishment along our frontier of a costly and extensive revenue service.

9. It is, therefore, the more important that the question of uniform Tariff should be speedily considered; and with this end this Government would propose that the Treasurers of the several Colonies—or some other person possessing the confidence of the respective Governments—should meet in Melbourne, in order to discuss how far united action in this respect is attainable.

10. I am aware that no mutual arrangement can be permanently binding upon the different Legislatures; but I can scarcely doubt that identity of interest would lead to the general and continued maintenance of any such arrangement, if once adopted.

I have the honor, &c.,

G. M. WATERHOUSE, *Chief Secretary.*

The Honourable the Chief Secretary, Victoria.

[Also to the Governments of Tasmania, Queensland, New South Wales, and Western Australia.]

[Mr. Moore acknowledges receipt of letter, and states that Mr. O'Shanassy would bring the subject before Parliament.]

Colonial Treasurer of Tasmania to Chief Secretary of South Australia.

Tasmania, Colonial Treasury, Hobart Town, April 15, 1862.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 19th ultimo, calling the attention of the Government of Tasmania to the difference of Tariffs among the Australian Colonies, and the desirability of placing their Tariffs on a uniform basis, &c., and in which you suggest that the question should be speedily considered by the Treasurers of the several Colonies, or some other person possessing the confidence of the respective Governments, at a Meeting to be held at Melbourne for the purpose.

In reply, I beg to state that, although the situation of this Colony makes uniformity of Tariff on the part of this and the other Australian Colonies of less importance to it or to them than uniformity among those Colonies themselves, still, the Government of Tasmania recognises the desirability of the object contemplated by the proposed Conference, and will despatch a representative to meet the Australian Delegates, should the time fixed for meeting be a convenient one—with reference to which I have to acquaint you that the Tasmanian Parliament is likely to assemble by the latter part of June next, or early in July, when the Tariff question, in all probability, will principally engage its attention.

I have the honor, &c.,

FRED. M. INNES.

The Honourable the Chief Secretary of Adelaide.

Colonial Secretary of Queensland to Chief Secretary of South Australia.

Colonial Secretary's Office, Brisbane, Queensland, May 17, 1862.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 18th March, which has been duly considered by the Governor in Council.

2. This Government fully recognises the expediency of making an attempt to place the Customs Tariffs of the several Australian Colonies upon a uniform scale. At the same time, it is impossible to overlook the difficulties with which any movement in that direction must be surrounded, and to which I need not here further advert. As the first step towards the removal of those difficulties, the Government of Queensland will be disposed to accede to the proposal of your Government that a preliminary Conference should be held in the central Colony, and will endeavour to arrange for the presence, on behalf of Queensland, of the Treasurer, or some other duly qualified officer, upon the receipt of a further communication.

3. This Government is not, however, equally able to entertain at the present time your proposal that the exports of each Colony should reciprocally be received by the other free of Duty. This latter is a proposition the abstract soundness and propriety of which the Government of Queensland does not now desire to question, but the time has not yet arrived for acceding to it. It is hoped that at no distant day our export of rum and sugar, as well as other tropical products, may be considerable, but at present to accede to such an arrangement as that submitted, would be, as regards Queensland, to sacrifice a considerable portion of our Customs revenue, and thereby to confer very small, if any, advantage upon our colonial producers.

4. In conclusion, I beg leave to convey to you the thanks of the Government of Queensland for your courteous and enlightened communication, and to express a hope that the praiseworthy efforts of the Government of South Australia to forward objects of such great importance may produce some satisfactory result.

I have the honour, &c.,

ROBERT G. W. HERBERT.

The Hon. the Chief Secretary of South Australia.

Colonial Secretary of New South Wales to Chief Secretary of South Australia.

*Colonial Secretary's Office, Sydney,
New South Wales, 22 May, 1862.*

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 18th of March last, drawing attention to the serious inconvenience arising from the existence of different tariffs in adjoining colonies, and to the necessity of taking some steps with a view to the establishment of a uniform scale of duties.

2. The importance of adopting an arrangement for this purpose has already pressed itself on the notice of this Government; and they have now under consideration the appointment of Commissioners to confer with any who may be nominated by the other colonies, and to ascertain how far united action in this respect is attainable.

3. It is the intention of the Government also to submit the subject to Parliament in the session about to commence; and I trust that the result of the steps contemplated will be the establishment of uniformity of system throughout the Australian colonies.

I have the honour, &c.,

CHARLES COWPER.

The Hon. the Chief Secretary of South Australia.

EXTRACT from Speech of His Excellency SIR JOHN YOUNG, Bart., Governor-in-Chief of New South Wales, on opening the present Session of the Parliament of that Colony (1861-2.)

6. The question of unrestricted commercial intercourse between New South Wales and the adjoining colonies has long engaged the attention of this Government, and the rapid settlement of population in the border districts renders an early adjustment very desirable. It is with much gratification that I inform you that the importance of this subject is now becoming more generally recognized, and that the Government of South Australia has sought the co-operation of this colony in the appointment of a commission of representatives from the various Australian colonies to consider and report on the question of a uniform tariff, which will form the basis of an arrangement by which each colony will receive that proportion of the revenue to which it is equitably entitled. I recommend the subject to your attentive consideration.

Colonial Secretary of Western Australia to Chief Secretary of South Australia.

*Western Australia, Colonial Secretary's Office,
Perth, 15 April, 1862.*

SIR,
I AM directed by His Excellency Governor Hampton to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of 26th ult., No. 176 | 62, recommending, at the request of His Excellency Sir Dominick Daly, the desirableness of placing the tariffs of the Australian colonies on a uniform basis, with a view to create a more cordial feeling between the several colonies, and possibly to prepare the way for a future federal union.

His Excellency Governor Hampton desires me to say that the geographical position of Western Australia precludes it from entering into any arrangement such as is proposed, but as soon as the general arrangements of the other Australian colonies are communicated, the Government of this colony will be glad to take them into consideration.

I have, &c.,
FRED. P. BARLEE.

The Hon. the Chief Secretary, Adelaide, South Australia.

[Mr. Waterhouse asks what time was proposed for meeting.]

Chief Secretary of Victoria to Chief Secretary of South Australia.

*Victoria, Chief Secretary's Office,
Melbourne, 17 July, 1862.*

SIR,
REFERRING to your letter of the 18th of March, proposing that representatives from the several Australian colonies should meet in conference at Melbourne, to consider the important question of uniform tariffs, and discuss how far united action is attainable to give effect to this desirable object, I have now the honour to inform you that this Government readily assent to the proposal, and will be prepared to name one or more members of the Cabinet to represent them at the proposed Conference, the time for holding which will, I presume, be settled with the other colonies by the South Australian Government.

Our Parliament, having learned that such a Conference had been proposed, have expressed their opinion that it would afford a suitable opportunity to consider the larger question of Australian Federation, and I have, therefore, to request that the Delegates named by your Government may be authorised also to confer and report upon this question.

All the papers on this important subject have been printed in the form of a pamphlet, six copies of which are forwarded herewith.

I have, &c.
JOHN O'SHANASSY.

The Honorable the Chief Secretary, South Australia.

COPY Letter from Chief Secretary, Victoria, to Colonial Secretary, Queensland.

Chief Secretary's Office, Melbourne, July 18, 1862.

SIR,
THE Government of South Australia having suggested a Conference of Delegates from each of the Australian Colonies to be held in Melbourne, to consider the subject of uniform Tariffs, I have the honor to intimate that this Government have notified their assent to the proposal.

It appears to the Government of Victoria, that the time of holding the Conference would be a favourable opportunity to consider the important question of Australian Federation, and I have, therefore, to invite your attention to the matter; and would suggest for the favorable consideration of the Government of Queensland, that the Delegates nominated to represent them at the proposed Conference be authorised also to confer and report upon that question.

I have, &c.,
(Signed) JOHN O'SHANASSY.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Queensland.

[Similar letter to the hon. the Colonial Secretaries, Tasmania, New South Wales, and South Australia.]

[Mr. Henty asks for more copies of the pamphlet.]

[Mr. Waterhouse intimates the names of the Delegates from South Australia and the day of meeting.]

COPY of Letter from Colonial Secretary, Brisbane, to Chief Secretary, Melbourne.

16 August, 1862.

SIR,
I do myself the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated the 18th July last, intimating that your Government have notified their assent to a proposition from the Government of South Australia, that a Conference of Delegates from each of the Australian Colonies should be held in Melbourne to consider the subject of uniform Tariffs, and suggesting for the favourable

consideration of this Government, that the Delegates nominated to represent them at the proposed Conference be authorised also to confer and report upon the question of Australian Federation. In reply, I do myself the honour to inform you, that your letter has been under the consideration of His Excellency Sir G. Bowen and his Executive Council, and that they are fully sensible of the importance of the questions involved, and are prepared to co-operate in the matter with the Governments of the other Australian Colonies.

But before taking part, the Government are desirous of being further informed upon the following points:—

1. What is the number of Delegates proposed to be appointed by each Colony?
2. What is to be the nature of such appointment?
3. Should the Delegates be selected from the Houses of Legislature?

It would appear that when the subject of Federation was formerly mooted in New South Wales and Victoria, these matters were defined; but this Government do not perceive any allusion to the *modus operandi* in the present proposition.

I have, &c.,
(Signed) R. G. W. HERBERT.

COPY of Telegram from Colonial Secretary, Queensland, to Chief Secretary, Victoria.

1 September, 1862.

MAY I request the favour of an early reply to my letter of the 16th ult., respecting Conference? This Government is desirous of taking immediate action, and would be glad of the information sought.

A. W. MANNING, P. U. Secretary.

COPY of Telegram from Colonial Secretary, Tasmania, to Chief Secretary, Melbourne.

15 September, 1862.

THE Colonial Secretary (too late to send written Despatch) begs for the favour of a reply to the following:—1st. Will the proposed Meeting of Delegates take place on the 15th October? 2nd. What are the objects for consideration (if any) beyond the subject of the Tariff? 3rd. How many Delegates are to attend from each Government? 4th. Are the Delegates appointed by Parliament, or by the Executive Government?

COPY of Letter from Chief Secretary, Victoria, to Chief Secretary, Queensland.

Chief Secretary's Office, September 4, 1862.

SIR,

I AM directed by the Honorable the Chief Secretary to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of 16th August, notifying that the Government of Queensland is willing to co-operate with the Governments of the other Australian Colonies in the matter of the proposed Conference, but requesting, before taking part, to be further informed on the following points:—

1. What is the number of Delegates proposed to be appointed by each Colony?
2. What is to be the nature of such appointment?
3. Should the Delegates be selected from the Houses of Legislature?

In reply, I have the honor, by Mr. O'Shanassy's desire, to state that it is proposed—

That Three Delegates should be appointed by each Colony.

That nomination by the Government of each Colony is to be the nature of their appointment.

That the Government of South Australia has appointed the Honorable the Treasurer of the Colony and one Member of each House of Legislature; and that this Government has decided upon nominating three Members of the Cabinet.

(Signed) J. MOORE, U.S.

COPY of Letter from Colonial Secretary, Queensland, to Chief Secretary, Victoria.

September 16, 1862.

SIR,

I do myself the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated the 4th instant, in further reference to the subject of the proposed Conference, in which you reply *seriatim* to the questions propounded in my communication of the 16th ultimo.

The Government of Queensland have again had under the most careful consideration the subject of the proposed Conference of Delegates from the several Australian Colonies, and the matter now presents itself to them in a light in which it had not been viewed before.

In each of the other Australian Colonies action in respect of the proposed Conference has been taken with Parliamentary sanction, the result of Parliamentary debate; whereas in this Colony, although certain papers upon the matter were laid upon the tables of the Houses of Legislature, no action whatever was taken, and no authority conveyed for entering an appearance at such Conference.

It would, moreover, appear that, both by the Government of Victoria and that of South Australia, the sanction of the respective Legislatures is held to be necessary to the recognition of the appointed Delegates.

This Government have, therefore, arrived at the conclusion that Queensland cannot, under these circumstances, be represented at the general Conference.

It is regretted that action cannot be taken in the matter by this Colony, as subjects of great mutual import might have been settled on satisfactory bases.

I have, &c.,
(Signed) A. W. MANNING, P. U. Secretary.

[Mr. Elyard, Under Secretary for New South Wales, as to the time of meeting.]

[Mr. Cowper (4th October), as to the time of meeting.]

[Various telegrams and letters as to the time of meeting.]

Telegram from the Chief Secretary of South Australia to the Colonial Secretary of New South Wales.

23rd December, 1862.

ALTHOUGH the Victorian Parliament is adjourned until the 20th January, the Government of that Colony declines to accede to the holding of any Conference prior to March next.

COPY of Letter from Under Secretary, Victoria, to the Honorable the Colonial Treasurer, South Australia.

Chief Secretary's Office, Melbourne, 24th December, 1862.

SIR,

By desire of the Chief Secretary, I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 21st instant, referring to the proposed Conference of Delegates from the Australian Colonies.

In reply, I am to state that Mr. O'Shanassy has submitted the letter to his colleagues, who regret that they are unable to fix a meeting for a time earlier than that mentioned in former communications; and I am to express his hope that the arrangement proposed will not be looked upon as unreasonable, or made with any other intention than to bring about ultimately the main object of the Conference in relation to the Tariff of the Colonies.

I have, &c.,
(Signed) J. MOORE, Under Secretary.

The Honorable ARTHUR BLYTH, Colonial Treasurer, South Australia.

Telegram from the Colonial Secretary of New South Wales to the Chief Secretary of South Australia.

24th December, 1862.

Am I to understand, then, that the South Australian Government gives up the idea of a Conference? If not, are you prepared to consider a proposition that the other Colonies, exclusive of Victoria, meet at Sydney? It would seem as if the Melbourne Ministry desired to put off the Conference altogether; for no time is convenient to them whether their Parliament is sitting or not sitting.

Telegram from the Chief Secretary of South Australia to the Colonial Secretary of New South Wales.

24th December, 1862.

Without consulting my colleagues, I cannot answer your telegram decidedly; but from what I know of their sentiments, I am convinced that we shall be agreed in favour of the representatives of the different Colonies, exclusive of Victoria, meeting in Conference in Sydney. It is evident that the Victorian Ministry are inimical to the Conference.

Telegram from the Chief Secretary of South Australia to the Colonial Secretary of New South Wales.

30th December, 1862.

This Government are quite prepared to adopt your suggestion as to the meeting of Delegates at Sydney. January will be the most convenient time, so far as this Colony is concerned.

Telegram from the Chief Secretary of New South Wales to the Chief Secretary of South Australia.

31st December, 1862.

Much gratified by the announcement contained in your telegram of yesterday, that the Government of South Australia adopts my suggestion regarding the Tariff Conference. As you have conducted the negotiation with the other Colonies so far, will you continue it? We are ready to receive the Delegates now, so that as regards New South Wales you may make any arrangements.

Perhaps Queensland may, after all, send Delegates; and I hope Tasmania will do so also.

Some intimation should, I apprehend, be made to Victoria; but you will know best what to do in that respect. Please inform me when you and the other Delegates are to be in Sydney.

Telegram from the Chief Secretary of South Australia to the Colonial Secretary of New South Wales.

31st December, 1862.

I have telegraphed to Queensland and Tasmania, proposing to hold the Conference at Sydney, on or about the 21st January, and likewise to Victoria, to the same effect; and expressing a hope that they will not continue to decline attending a Conference, evidently desired by the other Australian Colonies, and the principle of which has already received their approval.

Telegram from the Chief Secretary of South Australia to the Colonial Secretary of Tasmania.

31st December, 1862.

As it seems impossible to make any arrangements with Victoria for a meeting of Delegates in Melbourne, at a time mutually agreeable to the several Governments, this Government has agreed to a suggestion made by that of New South Wales, that the Delegates of other Colonies, exclusive of Victoria, should meet at Sydney. If you agree to this course, I propose that the Conference be held at Sydney, on or about 21st January. Please reply at once.

Copy of Telegram from Colonial Secretary, Tasmania, for Chief Secretary, South Australia.

6th January, 1863.

The meeting of our Parliament was postponed, in the hope that arrangements might be made in Melbourne early in the present month. That having failed, and Parliament having been summoned for the 15th, the Government regret they cannot accede to the present proposal of the South Australian Government.

Telegram from Chief Secretary of South Australia to Colonial Secretary of New South Wales.

9th January, 1863.

The Queensland Government declines taking any part in the proposed Conference at Sydney. This Government, therefore, considers it would be inexpedient to proceed with the Conference until circumstances are more favourable for its assembling.

Various letters and telegrams follow, finally fixing the meeting of the Conference to take place in Melbourne in March.

A P P E N D I X.

Papers on the Maintenance of Light-houses in Banks' Straits.

Marine Board, 21st March, 1863.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to enclose copy of a letter addressed by me on the 5th January last to the late Colonial Treasurer, with reference to the sums contributed annually by the neighbouring Colonies towards the maintenance of the Tasmanian Light-houses in Bass' Straits, and pointing out some reasons why these Colonies should contribute in like manner some part of the annual cost of the two Light-houses in Banks' Straits.

The question may, perhaps, be discussed at the Meeting of Delegates to be held in Melbourne next week; hence my reason for troubling you with this letter.

I have the honor to be,
Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

CRAWFORD M. MAXWELL.

Hon. C. MEREDITH, Colonial Treasurer, &c.

[COPY.]

Marine Board, Hobart Town, 5th January, 1863.

SIR,

REFERRING to a conversation with you lately on the subject of the Light-houses of this Colony, I have the honor to submit for your consideration the following observations:—

The Light-houses may be divided into two classes—the one purely local, namely Low Head, South Bruni, and the Iron Pot, which are useful to vessels trading to Tasmania only; the others are great highway lights, King's Island, Kent's Group, Goose Island, and Swan Island, the advantages of which are shared by all ships passing through Bass's and Banks' Straits.

It will be admitted by every one that either the vessels or the Colony whose trade derives benefit from any particular Light should contribute something towards its maintenance. For example, all foreign vessels trading to the Baltic pay a toll to Denmark in passing through the Sound, in consideration of the lights and beacons kept up in that narrow channel. In like manner, the Colonies of Victoria and New South Wales contribute, as you know, towards the cost of the Light-houses maintained by this Colony on King's Island and Kent's Group. Whether the amount of their contribution is sufficient is another question, to be considered hereafter.

Looking, therefore, at the fact that the trade between Melbourne and New Zealand, most of which passes through Banks' Straits, is equal to if not more than the trade between Tasmania and all parts of the world, and also at the fact that many of the gold ships, with cargoes of enormous value, pass the same Straits on the voyage from Melbourne to England, I believe the Government of Victoria could not refuse, if they were asked, to contribute towards the support of the Light-houses on Swan and Goose Islands. In point of fact, the Commissioners of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania, admit in their Report that the expense of the two Light-houses named ought to be defrayed by Victoria and Tasmania jointly; but decide that the whole expense should continue to be borne by this Colony, in consideration, to quote the words of the Report, "of the advantages accruing to the Tasmanian Trade" from the lights to be erected by Victoria on Cape Schanck and Wilson's Promontory.

I need scarcely remark that the advantages derived from the lights in Banks' Straits by the rich Colony of Victoria, with her enormous trade, exceed at least a hundredfold the advantages the trade of Tasmania derives from the lights on Cape Schanck and the Promontory; and, whatever may have been the case at the date of the Commissioners' Report, it would be absurd now to set off the one advantage as an equivalent for the other. While it is impossible for any ship trading to Victoria to arrive or depart without passing within range of some one or other of the Tasmanian Lights, there is not one ship out of a hundred trading to this Colony that passes in sight of a Victorian Light, unless, of course, she is bound to Port Phillip or Gipps Land.

The next question to discuss is, what share of expense ought to be apportioned to the Colonies whose ships or trade it is not denied participate in the benefit derived from the Light-houses in the Straits?

At present, in the case of Kent's Group the expense is divided equally between the three Colonies; whereas in the case of King's Island Victoria bears one-half, New South Wales and Tasmania one-fourth each; in neither case is the division an equitable one. The share of each Light ought clearly to be in proportion to the tonnage of any Colony which passes that Light; but as it would be impossible to ascertain this, perhaps the fairest way would be to take the tonnage entered inwards in each Colony as the basis of the calculation.

I have not been able to get the Statistics for all the three Colonies for 1861, and am, therefore, obliged to take 1860. In that year the tonnage entered inwards at the Customs was:—

In Victoria	581,642 tons.
In New South Wales	427,835 tons.
In Tasmania	116,172 tons.

Supposing, therefore, that the annual cost of the Light-houses on King's Island and Kent's Group were to be divided equitably, the share of each Colony would be—

Victoria	52 per cent.
New South Wales	38 "
Tasmania	10 "

In like manner, the share for the lights on Swan Island and Goose Island would be—

Victoria	83 per cent.
Tasmania	17 "

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your most obedient Servant,

(Signed) CRAWFORD M. MAXWELL.

The Hon. T. D. CHAPMAN, Colonial Treasurer.

STATEMENT showing Expenditure on account of Coast Light-houses, Harbour Lights, Light Vessels, and Jetty Lights in Victoria, for the Year ending 31st December, 1863.

	£	s.	d.
Cape Otway	1215	1	2
Gabo Island	1242	13	5
Shortland's Bluff	1332	18	8
Gellibrand's Point	975	1	4
West Channel	1881	4	4
Swan Spit	1384	11	8
Geelong Ship Channel	972	1	5
Williamstown Jetty	49	7	4
Sandridge Jetty	72	7	7
Portland Jetty	50	0	0
Geelong Jetty	73	0	0
TOTAL	£9248	6	11

NOTE.—The above does not include the expenses of transport, stores being conveyed by Government vessels.

STATEMENT of Expenditure for the Maintenance of Light-houses and Lights, in the Colony of New South Wales, during 1858.

	£	s.	d.
Sydney—Macquarie Light-house	778	11	0
„ Hornby Light-house	462	14	4
„ Bramble Light-ship	789	12	4
„ Fort Denison Light	73	3	11
Newcastle Light-house	486	9	8
Cape Moreton Light-house	892	9	3
Moreton Bay Floating Light	1126	7	4
TOTAL	£4609	7	10

COST of Light Service.—South Australia.—For the Year 1858.

	£	s.	d.
Light-ship	934	18	3
Troubridge Light-house	801	18	7
Sturt Light-house	921	8	0
Flinders Light-house	939	5	9
MacDonnell Light-house	835	0	6
TOTAL	£4432	11	1

APPENDIX.

The Acting Colonial Secretary of New South Wales to the Colonial Secretary of Victoria.

*Colonial Secretary's Office,
Sydney, New South Wales, 12 September, 1855.*

SIR,

I AM directed by His Excellency the Governor-General to request that you would bring under the notice of His Excellency Sir Charles Hotham the impediments which the arrangements for the collection of Customs Duties on the line of frontier between New South Wales and Victoria present to that unrestricted intercourse which should prevail between the inhabitants of two Colonies whose interests are identical.

2. The inconvenience which has already been caused to the settlers in the districts bordering upon this frontier has been very great,—sufficient, indeed, it is believed, to induce an extensive system of smuggling. That inconvenience will, of course, be increased as the population on either side of the boundary becomes more dense, while the difficulties which will be experienced by the Government in checking smuggling, and in collecting the Revenue, will be enhanced from day to day.

3. The system now in force is one which, while it may be fairly applied when the people who reside on the opposite sides of a river differ from each other in character and habits, and are besides subjects of a different Government, is, in the opinion of Sir William Denison, altogether inapplicable to New South Wales and Victoria, where the people on either side of the Murray speak the same language, are engaged in the same occupations, and are subjects of the same Sovereign.

4. The effect of the establishment of these internal Custom Houses is to compel those on either side of the frontier who may, from position or circumstances, be desirous to procure their supplies from the other side of the river, to pay double duty upon all dutiable articles. There is also this marked evil effect, that a system of smuggling is induced, which, in its turn, is sure to generate among the inhabitants of those remote districts an habitual disregard of law.

5. Under these circumstances, the Governor-General is desirous to suggest to Sir Charles Hotham the advisability of an agreement between the Governments of these two Colonies, to the effect, that no attempt shall be made to impose any restriction on New South Wales from Victoria—that in point of fact no Duties shall be levied except on the seaboard.

6. His Excellency is aware that at present the Duties levied upon several articles of import are higher in Victoria than in New South Wales, and that an objection may be made to the scheme as proposed, on the ground of difference, which might in certain cases tempt the settler in Victoria to purchase his stores in New South Wales. This objection, however, Sir William Denison proposes to meet by an assimilation of the Tariffs of the two Colonies; and he is prepared to submit to the Legislature of New South Wales the adoption, with a trifling exception in the case of refined sugar, of the Tariff of Duties now levied in Victoria upon imported articles, leaving any modification which it may hereafter be desirable to make in these Duties for future discussion between the Governments of these Colonies.

7. Sir W. Denison feels certain that Sir C. Hotham will not have overlooked the evils arising from the restrictions of intercourse between the people residing on either side of a mere arbitrary line which must necessarily result from the vexatious interference of Custom-house Officers. An evil which has caused, even in Germany, the abolition of all internal Custom-houses, ought not to be reproduced in Australia.

I have, &c.,

(Signed)

C. D. RIDDELL.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Victoria.

PROCLAMATION.

By His Excellency Sir CHARLES HOTHAM, Knight, Commander of the Most Honourable Military Order of the Bath, Captain-General and Governor-in-Chief of the Colony of Victoria, and Vice-Admiral of the same, &c.

WHEREAS, by an Act of the Governor and Legislative Council of the Colony of Victoria, passed in the Seventeenth Year of the Reign of Her present Majesty, intituled "An Act to amend an Act intituled 'An Act for the General Regulation of the Customs in the Colony of Victoria,'" it was, amongst other things, enacted, that it should be lawful for the Governor of Victoria, with the advice of the Executive Council, to make Regulations and arrangements with the Governor of New South Wales and the Governor of South Australia for the Importation of Goods by or across the River Murray, and for the imposition of Duties and the amount thereof on such Goods, or the exemption of the same from Duties, and the recovery of Duties on Goods so imported into the said Colony, and the repayment of such Duties, and in other respects so to regulate the Trade on the said River as might be from time to time agreed upon by the said Governor of Victoria with the Governors of New South Wales and South Australia, or either of them: Now I, the Governor of Victoria aforesaid, do hereby notify and proclaim that I have, with the advice of the Executive Council, made with the Governor-General of New South Wales the following arrangements; that is to say:—

1. From and after the 1st day of November, 1855, no Import Duties will be levied by the Government of Victoria on Goods brought from New South Wales into Victoria across the River Murray; and no Import Duties will be levied by the Government of New South Wales on Goods brought from Victoria into New South Wales across the River Murray.

2. The proceeds of the Collections by the Government of South Australia, in respect of dutiable Goods brought up the River Murray for consumption either in Victoria or New South Wales, will be equally divided between Victoria and New South Wales.

Given under my hand and the seal of the Colony, at Melbourne, this 29th day of October, in the year of Our Lord 1855, and in the Nineteenth year of Her Majesty's Reign.

(L.S.)

(Signed)

CHAS. HOTHAM.

By His Excellency's Command,
(Signed) W. C. HAINES.

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN!

CUSTOMS' DUTIES, MURRAY RIVER.

Copy of Correspondence between the Government of this Colony and that of New South Wales relative to Duties on Goods crossing the River Murray.

Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales, Wednesday, September 10, 1862.

EQUALISATION OF TARIFFS.

Mr. Weekes moved, pursuant to notice—"That, in the opinion of this House, it is desirable that New South Wales should be represented at the proposed Conference of Delegates from the various Australian Colonies to be held at Melbourne, on the subject of a uniform Tariff, with a view to secure for each Colony the Revenue to which it is entitled." Question put and passed.

[Copy.]

Melbourne, April 11, 1863.

SIR,

As the proceedings of the Intercolonial Conference are now drawing to a close, I have the honor to enquire whether the Government of Victoria is willing to co-operate with the Government of New South Wales in an arrangement for securing to the Revenue of that Colony the Customs' Duties upon Goods imported overland from Victoria?

I beg to enclose a Copy of the Act passed by the New South Wales Parliament, authorising the completion of a Treaty for the equitable settlement of this question, and also of the Resolution passed by the Legislative Assembly, showing that in sanctioning the appointment of Delegates to the Conference, a primary object was the attainment of the same end.

As the negotiation may be facilitated by personal communication, and as the Delegates are anxious to return with as little delay as possible, I shall feel much obliged by an early reply to this inquiry.

I have, &c.,

(Signed) CHARLES COWPER.

The Hon. JOHN O'SHANASSY, Esq., Chief Secretary of Victoria.

No. XI.

An Act to authorise certain Arrangements respecting Customs' Duties on Goods brought into New South Wales by and across the River Murray. [Assented to 2nd January, 1862.]

Whereas certain goods liable to pay Duty to this Colony are brought from the Colony of Victoria into this Colony across the River Murray, upon which goods no Duties are collected in this Colony, and it is expedient to make provision for the future collection of such duties: Be it therefore enacted by the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly of New South Wales, in Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

1. The Governor, with the advice of the Executive Council, may enter into a binding treaty with the Government of the Colony of Victoria, under which treaty all Duties payable upon goods liable to Duty under the New South Wales "Customs Duties Act" of 1855, and "Opium Duties Act" of 1857, may be collected by the Government of Victoria, and in lieu thereof, an annual sum, of an amount to be agreed on by the contracting parties, may be paid by that Government to the credit of this Colony: Provided that any such treaty shall not extend beyond the period of three years from the date thereof.

2. This Act shall be styled and may be cited as the "River Murray Customs Act" of 1861.

[Copy.]

Chief Secretary's Office, Melbourne, 4th May, 1863.

SIR,

YOUR letter of the 11th April having been submitted to the Honourable the Commissioner of Trade and Customs, the Chief Secretary has received a statement of his views upon the subject of Duties on goods crossing the River Murray, a copy of which, by desire of Mr. O'Shanassy, who is absent from Town, I have the honor to transmit.

I have, &c.,

(Signed) J. MOORE.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, New South Wales.

[Copy.]

Department of Trade and Customs, Melbourne, April 30th, 1863.

SIR,

ADVERTING to the letter from the Honorable the Colonial Secretary of New South Wales, dated 11th April, and received from your office on the 20th idem, I am directed by the Commissioner of Trade and Customs to forward to you the accompanying memorandum respecting Duties on Murray River borne goods, and to state that Mr. Cowper's despatch will be returned to you to-morrow.

I have, &c.,

(Signed) J. CHATFIELD TYLER.

The Hon. the Chief Secretary, &c.

(Copy.) Memo. referred to.

Department of Trade and Customs, Melbourne, 29th April, 1863.

IN returning the letter of the Honourable the Chief Secretary of New South Wales, of the 11th instant, in which the co-operation of this Government is sought to secure to the revenue of that Colony the Customs' Duties upon goods imported overland from Victoria, I do not consider it necessary to repeat the reasons which have so frequently been given by the Government of this Colony against complying with this request.

The system of collecting border Customs on the River Murray was abolished in October, 1855, on the grounds contained in the despatch of Mr. Riddell, Acting Colonial Secretary of New South Wales, under date 12th September of that year, to which despatch I would refer, as containing unanswerable objections against the re-establishment of border Custom Houses.

I would also beg leave to refer to the communications of my predecessor, Mr. Pyke, on the subject of border Customs, under date 6th August and 17th September, 1860, in which that gentleman, at great length, adduces reasons why the Government of Victoria should decline to entertain a former application from Mr. Cowper of a character similar to the present, which reasons I endorse and resubmit as grounds for refusing to comply with the present application.

In addition, however, to the very sufficient arguments contained in the documents to which I have referred, against the continuance or re-establishment of border Custom Houses, I would respectfully suggest that Mr. Cowper's attention should be directed to the fact, that in the years 1857 and 1858 the Government of New South Wales received, under terms of the agreement of October, 1855, sums amounting to £16,184 10s. as its share (being one-half) of the Customs' Duties collected on River Murray borne goods. And although it was notorious that nine-tenths of the Dutiable goods so carried were landed in Victoria and consumed on the northern gold-fields of this Colony, yet no attempt was either made, or threatened to be made, by the Victorian Government to re-establish the border Customs system, although on River Murray borne goods it could have been done simply, efficaciously, and inexpensively, whereas no system could be adopted, save at an expense utterly incommensurate with the object, to collect, with any degree of efficiency, Duties payable on goods merely borne across the River.

The Government of New South Wales is now of opinion that free trade across the Murray is detrimental to the Revenue of that Colony, but the present condition of things in that respect may be reversed within a period of three years, and yet I observe it is only for such a period that the Act of the New South Wales Legislature empowers its Government to enter into a treaty, leaving it open to that Government to decline a renewal of the agreement should circumstances render such a renewal unfavourable to the interests of that Colony.

I think, however, it would be well to request Mr. Cowper to submit a distinct proposition regarding the appropriation of the Revenue raised from dutiable goods carried across the Murray from and into Victoria, as he may possibly be in possession of a feasible and equitable project, which I fail to perceive, and any such project shall receive my prompt and careful consideration.

(Signed) ROBERT S. ANDERSON.

Colonial Secretary's Office, Sydney, New South Wales, May 11, 1863.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge the receipt of Mr. Anderson's minute which he has submitted in reply to the letter which I addressed to you when in Melbourne on the 11th ultimo.

Mr. Anderson alludes to the correspondence which took place between the Governments of Victoria and New South Wales in the year 1855, with reference to the system of collecting border Customs on the River Murray; but I would observe that this has nothing to do with the question in its present state. Sir William Denison acted on the occasion referred to without asking for the sanction of the Legislature previously, and although the arrangement was not disallowed, it cannot be denied that there has been a growing dissatisfaction on the part of New South Wales with it.

It was on this account that the Parliament passed the Act, of which I enclosed a copy in my former letter, and the Executive Government is now charged with the duty of arranging for a treaty by which such a sum as may be deemed equitable shall be paid by Victoria to New South Wales for Duties collected by the former Colony and consumed within the limits of the latter.

Whatever arguments may be urged against the establishment of border Custom-houses, they have been considered, and already determined upon; and I beg entirely to dissent from Mr. Anderson's opinion, that "no system could be adopted save at an expense entirely incommensurate with the object, to collect with any degree of efficiency Duties payable on goods merely borne across the river."

Without, however, desiring to prolong the discussion, I would, in compliance with Mr. Anderson's request, make the following propositions, either of which will be acceptable to this Government:—

First. That the Duties upon goods consumed by the inhabitants of both Colonies should be divided at stated periods, rateably, according to the population. Or,

Secondly. That localities should be fixed upon and proclaimed as crossing places, where alone parties having dutiable goods for transit should be allowed, under a system of permits, to remove them from one Colony to the other, and the Revenue, at stated periods, be settled between the respective Governments. This system has been agreed upon already between the Governments of New South Wales and Queensland. Or,

Thirdly. That, after fully considering the probable amount of Revenue at present lost yearly by New South Wales, from the non-collection of the Duties upon goods imported across the Murray River, and consumed within her territory, a fixed annual sum should be agreed to be paid in satisfaction of the amount to which she is legally entitled. It is submitted that no difficulty whatever could be experienced in determining such amount.

The completion of a treaty upon either of these bases would tend to remove a feeling which is now entertained by the Government and Parliament of this Colony that New South Wales does not receive that Revenue to which she is entitled, and would render unnecessary a recourse to steps which, however inconvenient, must be resorted to in order that the law may be carried out in the border districts as it is in all other parts of the Colony.

I shall be obliged by an early reply to this communication, as the financial arrangements of this Government may be materially affected by your determination.

I have, &c.,

(Signed) CHAS. COWPER.

To the Honorable JOHN O'SHANASSY, Esquire,
Chief Secretary, Melbourne.

Chief Secretary's Office, Melbourne, 30th May, 1863.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 11th instant, in further reference to the subject of Duties on Goods crossing the River Murray.

With reference to the second paragraph of the communication, I would remind you that when Sir William Denison came to the conclusion that it was not for the interest of either of the Colonies that Border Duties should be collected he was moved by the reasons set forth in Mr. Riddell's Despatch of the 12th September, 1855. The same reasons, I may be permitted to say, hold good at the present day, and do not admit of controversy.

With reference to the argument that Victoria should enter into the arrangement you propose because Queensland has entered into a similar one, it appears to me to have no force, as it remains yet to be proved whether an effective check can by any means be maintained along a border of such great extent.

Further, I would observe, that as no treaty made under the New South Wales Act could be in force for a longer period than three years, whatever agreement might be entered into at the present day would still leave the question as much at sea as ever when that short period had elapsed.

Viewing the great benefits which New South Wales derives from the increased facilities afforded to her traffic by the Victorian railway, the large consumption of her surplus stock by the people of this Colony, the prospective consumption of her wines from the Murray Bank Vineyards and her home-grown tobacco, I consider it may fairly be contended that the free passage of the Murray is not more than an equivalent for the advantages reaped by New South Wales from her proximity to Victoria.

It only remains for me to add that, failing to discover any equitable ground for disturbing the existing arrangement entered into at the instance of the Government of New South Wales, I am unable to convey the assent of this Government to any of the three propositions you submit.

I have, &c.,
(Signed) JOHN O'SHANASSY.

To the Hon. the Colonial Secretary, New South Wales.

(Copy.)

New Town Park, 14th May, 1863.

SIR,

THE censures that have been passed by the several papers of Melbourne upon the conduct of the Tasmanian Delegates cannot have escaped your observation.

I have waited thus long in the expectation and hope that His Excellency's Government would have called upon those Delegates for a refutation or explanation of the charges contained in those journals.

As His Excellency's Government, however, has not thought fit to do so, I think a longer silence on my part might be construed into a culpable dereliction of duty, and a want of respect towards His Excellency, by whom I was appointed, my constituents, and the public generally.

Whether those charges of breach of faith and sullied honor can be laid to any one of the Tasmanian Delegates, I am unable to say. For myself, I claim a complete exoneration from one and all of them. I neither communicated to the public press, nor to any person whatever, any subject or matter (either whole or in part) which engaged the deliberations of the Conference at Melbourne; nor have I any knowledge by whom such disclosures were made.

I have the honor to remain,
Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,
(Signed) WM. CARTER.

The Honourable the Colonial Secretary.

(Copy.)

Colonial Secretary's Office, 22nd May, 1863.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 14th instant, calling my attention to certain "censures that have been passed by the several papers of Melbourne upon the conduct of the Tasmanian Delegates," which you say cannot have escaped my observation. You further inform me that you "have waited thus long in the expectation and hope that His Excellency's Government would have called upon those Delegates for a refutation or explanation of the charges contained in those journals."

I have noticed the articles you refer to; but I am not aware of anything having been revealed that it was agreed by the Conference should be kept secret; and, consequently, His Excellency's Government did not consider any such charges made against the Tasmanian Delegates worthy of consideration: but, upon the meeting of Parliament, it will be my duty to take such notice of what has been alleged against them as will clearly show that, if any improper revelations have been made, they are not the guilty parties.

I have, &c.
(Signed) JAMES WHYTE.

The Honourable WILLIAM CARTER, Esquire,
New Town Park.