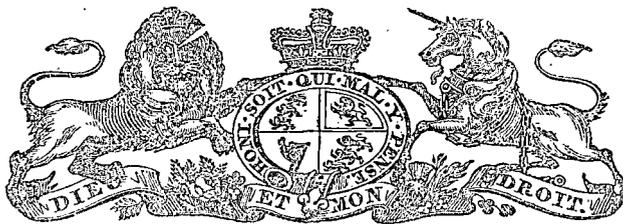


(No. 18.)



1865.

T A S M A N I A.

TASMANIAN HIGHWAY LIGHTS IN BANKS
AND BASS'S STRAITS.

Correspondence between the Governments of Tasmania, New South Wales,
and Victoria on the Re-adjustment of the Contributions from those
Colonies to the Maintenance of the Highway or Ocean Lights situated
on Tasmanian Territory.

.. Laid upon the Table by the Colonial Treasurer, and ordered by the House to be
printed, 26 July, 1865.



TASMANIAN HIGHWAY LIGHTS.

Colonial Secretary's Office, 12th December, 1864.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to draw your attention to the unsatisfactory position in which the discussions of two Inter-colonial Conferences have left the important question of Australian Coast Light-houses.

It will be in your recollection that, at the Conference held in Melbourne in March, 1863, a Resolution was carried on the motion of the Honorable Mr. Cowper, the Delegate from New South Wales, to the effect that—"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 of the respective Governments represented at this Conference, to consider and report upon the entire subject.*"

In accordance with that Resolution a second Conference, specially assembled for the consideration of this single question, was held in Melbourne in the month of February in this year.

At that Conference, notwithstanding its suggestion by the Colonial Secretary of New South Wales, the Government of that Colony was not represented by a Delegate; but the Honorable Mr. Hart, the Delegate from South Australia, was "authorised to give full information of the views of the Government of New South Wales."

The Conference was attended by Delegates from Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania, who agreed to a Report embodying certain proposals for the equitable adjustment of the Contributions payable by the several Colonies towards the maintenance of the Highway or Ocean Lights, which was transmitted in due course to the Government of New South Wales.

In order to the preparation of the Scale of Charges in accordance with the Tables appended to the Report, as determined in paragraph 9, it was necessary that certain Returns of Tonnage of the Shipping inwards and outwards at the ports of the several Colonies should be supplied by their respective Governments.

These Returns have been furnished by the Governments of Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania.

The Chief Secretary of Victoria, in a letter dated the 13th January, prior to the holding of the Conference, applied to the Colonial Secretary of New South Wales to "furnish for the information of the Delegates," amongst other papers, "a particular statement (say for 1863) of the number and tonnage of all vessels, both inwards and outwards, giving the ports of arrival and departure, and showing the charges actually paid, or a reason for exemption."

At the close of the Conference, the Chief Secretary of Victoria, at the suggestion of the Honorable Mr. Wilson, the Delegate from Tasmania, urged the Government of New South Wales, in a Telegraphic Message, to forward to Melbourne, "with as little delay as possible, the Returns called for in Mr. M'Culloch's letter dated the 13th January;" and a Telegraphic reply was received from Sydney promising that the Returns in question should be furnished.

These Returns have not yet been supplied by the Government of New South Wales, which has up to this moment failed to intimate its readiness to accede to the terms of the Contribution to the Maintenance of the Light-houses agreed upon by the last Conference.

It is thus apparent that the present unsettled state of the question of Coast Light-houses is the result of the course of action which has been followed by the Government of New South Wales.

I cannot doubt that the question would have been satisfactorily adjusted in February last had a member of the Government of New South Wales attended the Conference, in accordance with the suggestion contained in Mr. M'Culloch's letter already referred to, "that each Colony should be attended by a member of its Government, as it was very desirable there should be actually present an authoritative power of prompt acceptance or decision."

And I am constrained to observe, that the failure of the Government of New South Wales to furnish the promised Returns has deprived this Government of the means of suggesting some other terms of adjustment which might hope to command the assent and acceptance of the Colonies interested.

The Government of Tasmania, however, is determined that this question shall remain no longer on its present footing. And I have now the honor to request that you will have the goodness to furnish me with the Shipping Returns indicated in Mr. M'Culloch's letter of the 13th January last, in order that I may be enabled to submit to the Government of New South Wales fresh proposals for the adjustment of the contributions of that Colony towards the cost of the maintenance of the Light-houses on King's Island and Kent's Group, within the territory of Tasmania.

I may state here, that I wish to be furnished with the Shipping Returns for the year 1863, and that the arrangement which I shall hereafter submit for the acceptance of your Government will be proposed to operate retrospectively from the 1st January, 1864.

In consequence of the failure of the last Conference to secure an equitable adjustment of the contributions of the several Colonies towards the maintenance of the whole system of Australian Coast Light-houses, the Government of Tasmania will confine its proposals to the two Light-houses I have named above, which are absolutely indispensable to the safe navigation of ships trading between ports in New South Wales and Europe, the Eastern Coast of America, India, Africa, South Australia, Western Australia, China, Mauritius, and the Port of Launceston.

The Colonies of New South Wales and Tasmania contribute under the existing arrangement in equal proportions to the Light-houses on King's Island and Kent's Group. But the advantages derived from these Lights by ships sailing to and from Ports in Tasmania are quite incommensurate with the extent to which the Colony is charged for their maintenance.

The Shipping Trade of Tasmania, so inconsiderable when compared with that of the Colonies of New South Wales and Victoria, can ill support the burdens which the Legislature is now compelled to impose upon it for the maintenance of these Light-houses under the present system.

The Government of Victoria fully admits the injustice of the existing arrangement in its operation upon the Shipping Trade and Public Revenue of Tasmania, and is willing to accede to any reasonable suggestion for the re-adjustment of the proportionate contributions of the two Colonies to the support of the Light-houses now under consideration.

The Government of New South Wales must be prepared to admit its equitable obligations in the same direction; and I trust that the terms which I shall on a future occasion propose for your acceptance will approve themselves to your sense of what is reasonable and just. But, under any circumstances, the existing state of things cannot be permitted to continue to the injury and disadvantage of this Colony; and should it be found impossible to re-adjust the proportionate contributions towards Tasmanian Light-houses of the Colonies which profit most largely by their maintenance, the Government of Tasmania will be reluctantly compelled to consider the propriety of discontinuing their use altogether.

In that case the responsibility of depriving the Commerce of Australia of the immense advantage of the Light-houses on King's Island and at Kent's Group must necessarily rest with that Colony which declines to recognise its legitimate obligations to contribute to their maintenance.

The importance of the question, and the necessity for its prompt determination, justify me in requesting that you will supply me with the Returns I have called for with as little delay as possible.

I have, &c.,

JAMES MILNE WILSON,

For the Colonial Secretary.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, New South Wales.

Colonial Secretary's Office, Sydney, New South Wales, 4th January, 1865.

SIR,

IN acknowledging the receipt of your letter of the 12th ultimo, requesting to be furnished with the Returns in connection with Australian Coast Light-houses, called for in a communication from the Chief Secretary of Victoria, dated 13th January, 1864, I have the honor to inform you that the Returns in question were forwarded to the above Minister in my letter of the 13th June last.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

WILLIAM FORSTER.

The Honorable the Colonial Secretary, Tasmania.

TASMANIA.

Colonial Secretary's Office, 14th February, 1865.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 4th ultimo, in reply to my communication dated the 12th of December last, on the subject of the cost of maintenance of the Australian Highway Light-houses situated within the jurisdiction of Tasmania.

I desire now to lay before the Government of New South Wales a scheme for the joint support by the Colonies of New South Wales, Victoria, and Tasmania of the Light-houses on King's Island, Kent's Group, Swan Island, and Goose Island.

I propose that these four Light-houses shall be maintained on the principles laid down as applicable to all Light-houses described as "Highway or Ocean Lights" in paragraph 4 of the Report of the Conference held in Melbourne in February, 1864, at which the "Honorable Mr. Hart, the Delegate from South Australia, was authorised to give full information of the views of the Government of New South Wales."

Those principles, as agreed to by the Conference, are thus enunciated in paragraphs 5 and 7 of the Report:—"That such Highway or Ocean Lights shall be maintained at the joint expense of the following Colonies; viz., Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia, and Tasmania, rateably in proportion to the tonnage of the shipping entered inwards and cleared outwards in each of the said Colonies;" and "that the rate payable by each Colony shall be in the first instance determined by a calculation based upon the Returns of Tonnage for the year 1863."

The Government of Tasmania propose to apply these principles to the maintenance by Victoria, New South Wales, and Tasmania of the four Light-houses already named, as follows:—

1. That the tonnage of Shipping entered inwards and cleared outwards at Ports of the three contributing Colonies according to Tables A and B annexed to the Report of the Conference of February, 1864, shall be taken as shown by the Returns furnished to the Conference for the year 1863.

2. That the expense of the four Light-houses shall be taken at the ascertained cost of maintenance by the Government of Tasmania from year to year.

3. That the cost of maintenance of the four Light-houses so ascertained shall be distributed amongst the contributaries rateably in proportion to tonnage of Shipping of each Colony, in terms of Article 1.

4. That this scheme of joint contribution shall take effect retrospectively from the 1st January, 1864, and continue in force until the 31st December, 1868.

I enclose a copy of the Report of the Conference held in Melbourne in February, 1864, and desire to draw your attention to the columns added to Tables A and B appended to that Report, showing the tonnage of Shipping in each Colony benefitted by the existence of the "Highway or Ocean Lights," compiled since the close of the Conference from the Shipping Returns furnished by the several Governments of Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia, and Tasmania.

I also enclose a Tabular Statement, showing the cost of the maintenance of the four Tasmanian Light-houses in 1863, and exhibiting what would have been the proportionate charge to each of the three Colonies in that year on the basis of the scheme now proposed.

It will be seen from that Statement that the additional charge to New South Wales in 1863 on the proposed scale would have been £99 4s. 6d., while Victoria would have paid in the same year £1240 13s. 3d. beyond her contributions under the system which has been in force since 1856.

You will perceive that New South Wales is only called upon to contribute to the Lights on King's Island and Kent's Group in the ratio of 34 per cent. and 37 per cent. respectively; while Victoria is called upon to contribute 64 per cent. of the cost of King's Island Light, 52 per cent. of the cost of the Kent's Group Light, and 87 per cent. of the cost of the Lights on Swan and Goose Islands.

The cost of maintenance of these Lights will probably vary from year to year, but by the proposed arrangement none of the contributaries will be required to pay in any year a larger proportion of the actual expenditure on each Light than the per-centage shown in the appended Statement.

I trust that the Government of New South Wales will entertain these proposals as suggesting a reasonable and equitable re-arrangement of the present scheme of joint contribution towards the cost of the Light-houses under consideration.

These Lights are, practically, isolated beacons provided for the safety and protection of Australian Commerce. The accidental circumstance of their situation on Tasmanian territory cannot deprive them of the character ascribed to them by the Report of the Conference of February, 1864, of "Highway or Ocean Lights."

The justice of the proposal to distribute the cost of maintenance amongst the several contributaries in proportion to the amount of shipping of each Colony benefited by the existence of the Light-houses will not, I feel convinced, be disputed or denied by the Government of New South Wales.

I shall communicate these proposals to the Government of Victoria, which I hope to find prepared to acquiesce in the suggested arrangement.

I shall be glad to receive an early communication of the views of the Government of New South Wales on a subject of so much importance to the Commerce of all the Colonies concerned, and possessing a special interest for the Revenue and Shipping trade of Tasmania.

You will observe that the proposal that the new arrangement should continue in force until the 31st December, 1868, is based upon the concluding recommendation of the Report of the Delegates to the Conference of February, 1864, "that a Treaty based upon the principles agreed to by the Conference be entered into by their respective Governments, such Treaty to extend over a period of five years from the 1st January, 1864."

I have, &c.,

JAMES MILNE WILSON,

Pro Colonial Secretary, (absent).

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, New South Wales.

REPORT of the CONFERENCE appointed by the respective Governments of Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania, to reconsider the Report of the Commission appointed in the Year 1856, to confer upon the subject of Light-houses in the several Australian Colonies, and to devise an equitable Adjustment of the Contributions payable by the several Colonies towards the Maintenance of the Highway or Ocean Lights.

Members of the Conference.

The Honorable JAMES GOODALL FRANCIS, Commissioner of Trade and Customs in Victoria, Chairman;

The Honorable JOHN HART, Treasurer of South Australia.

The Honorable JAMES MILNE WILSON, Member of the Executive Council of Tasmania.

1. THE Delegates appointed by the respective Governments of Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania, to reconsider the Report of the Commission appointed in the year 1856, to confer upon the subject of the Light-houses in the several Australian Colonies, and to devise an equitable adjustment of the contributions payable by the several Colonies towards the maintenance of the Highway or Ocean Lights, having assembled at the office of the Commissioner of Customs, in Melbourne, and the absence of any Delegates from the Colonies of New South Wales and Queensland having been noticed, it appeared that official letters had been addressed by the Chief Secretary of Victoria to the heads of the Governments of those Colonies, but that the Government of Queensland had declined to take part in the Conference, and that no letter had been received from the Government of New South Wales.

TABLE A.

LIGHT-HOUSE.	CONTRIBUTING COLONY.	ON TONNAGE OF ALL VESSELS ENTERED INWARDS.		ESTIMATED AGGREGATE TONNAGE.*
		From	At	
KING'S ISLAND ..	Victoria . . .	Europe, America, (not including West Coast), India, Africa, South Australia, China, Mauritius	All ports of contributing colony, except Portland Bay.	320,831
	New South Wales	Europe, America (not including West Coast), India, Africa, South Australia, China, Mauritius	Ditto	161,611
	Tasmania . . .	Europe, America (not including West Coast), India, Africa, South Australia, China, Mauritius	Launceston	3,824
	South Australia .	Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, and Tasmania	All ports of contributing colony	67,556
KENT'S GROUP ...	Victoria . . .	New Zealand, West Coast of America, Tasmania	Ditto	122,131
	New South Wales	Europe, America (not including West Coast), India, Mauritius, South Australia, China, Launceston	Ditto	164,450
	Tasmania . . .	New South Wales, Queensland	Launceston	17,000
	Tasmania . . .	Victoria	Hobart Town	18,635
	South Australia .	New Zealand, South Sea Islands, West Coast of America	All ports of contributing colony	3,639
SWAN ISLAND AND GOOSE ISLAND ..	Victoria . . .	Hobart Town and Southern Ports of Tasmania	Ditto	40,188
	New South Wales	<i>Nil</i>		
	Tasmania . . .	Victoria	Hobart Town	18,635
	Tasmania . . .	New Zealand	Launceston	4,904
CAPE OTWAY	Victoria . . .	Hobart Town	All ports of contributing colony	
	Victoria . . .	Europe, America (not including West Coast), India, China, Mauritius, Africa, South Australia	Ditto	320,831
	New South Wales	Europe, America (not including West Coast), India, China, Mauritius, Africa, South Australia	Ditto	161,611
	Tasmania . . .	Europe, America (not including West Coast), India, China, Mauritius, Africa, South Australia	Launceston	3,824
WILSON'S PROMONTORY	South Australia .	Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, Tasmania, West Coast of America, New Zealand	All ports of contributing colony	67,556
	Victoria . . .	Queensland, Tasmania, New Zealand, West Coast of America, New South Wales	Ditto	246,726
	New South Wales	Victoria	Ditto	102,235
	Tasmania . . .	Victoria	Hobart Town	18,635
GABO ISLAND	South Australia .	New South Wales, Queensland	All ports of contributing colony	23,773
	Victoria . . .	New South Wales, Queensland, West Coast of America, South Sea Islands	Ditto	131,302
	New South Wales	Europe, America (not including West Coast), India, Mauritius, China, Africa, Tasmania, South Australia, Western Australia	Ditto	172,524
	Tasmania . . .	New South Wales, Queensland, West Coast of America, South Sea Islands	Ditto	12,168
CAPE SCHANK	South Australia .	New South Wales, Queensland, West Coast of America, South Sea Islands	Ditto	26,934
	Victoria . . .	All ports	Ditto	578,123
	New South Wales	Port Phillip	Ditto	99,622
	Tasmania . . .	Port Phillip	Ditto	33,655
M'DONNELL LIGHT, CAPE NORTHUMBERLAND	South Australia .	Port Phillip	Ditto	32,983
	Victoria . . .	South Australia, Western Australia	Ditto	26,822
	New South Wales	South Australia, Western Australia	Ditto	24,815
	Tasmania . . .	South Australia, Western Australia	Ditto	
CAPE WILLOUGHBY	South Australia .	Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, Tasmania, New Zealand, West Coast of America, South Sea Islands	Ditto	67,556
	Victoria . . .	South Australia	Ditto	26,822
	New South Wales	South Australia	Ditto	24,815
	Tasmania . . .	South Australia	Ditto	1,212
CAPE BORDA	South Australia .	New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania, New Zealand, Queensland, West Coast of America, South Sea Islands	Ditto	67,556
	Victoria . . .	Spencer's Gulf	Ditto	
	New South Wales	Spencer's Gulf	Ditto	
	Tasmania . . .	Spencer's Gulf	Ditto	1,212
CAPE ST. GEORGE	South Australia .	Europe, India, China, America (not including West Coast), Africa, Mauritius, Western Australia	Ditto	51,995
	Victoria . . .	New South Wales, Queensland, South Sea Islands	Ditto	124,595
	New South Wales	All ports except those in Queensland, New Zealand, West Coast of America, South Sea Islands	Ditto	977,728
	Tasmania . . .	New South Wales, Queensland, South Sea Islands	Ditto	12,009
SOUTH HEAD LIGHT, SYDNEY	South Australia .	New South Wales, Queensland, South Sea Islands	Ditto	23,773
	Victoria . . .	New South Wales, Queensland	Ditto	124,595
	New South Wales	All ports	Ditto	1,156,805
	Tasmania . . .	New South Wales, Queensland	Ditto	12,009
	South Australia .	New South Wales, Queensland	Ditto	23,773

* This column, showing the amount of Tonnage of Shipping in each Colony, was added to Table A. subsequently to the date of the Report of the Conference, and is referred to as "the column added in ink" in the Honorable Mr. Wilson's letters to the Colonial Secretary of New South Wales, dated the 14th February, 1865, and to the Chief Secretary of Victoria, dated 17th February, 1865.

TABLE B.

LIGHT-HOUSE.	CONTRIBUTING COLONY.	ON TONNAGE OF ALL VESSELS CLEARED OUTWARDS.		ESTIMATED AGGREGATE TONNAGE.*
		<i>At</i>	<i>For</i>	
KING'S ISLAND...	Victoria . . .	Port Phillip and Eastern Ports	South Australia, Western Australia, Africa, Mauritius, and half the tonnage to India & China	91,725
	New South Wales	All ports of contributing Colony	South Australia, Western Australia, Africa, Mauritius, and one-fourth tonnage to India and China	
	Tasmania . . .	Ditto	South Australia, Western Australia, Africa, Mauritius, and half tonnage to India and China	
	South Australia . . .	Ditto	Melbourne and Eastern Ports, New South Wales, Queensland, Launceston, New Zealand	
KENT'S GROUP ..	Victoria . . .	Ditto	Tasmania, $\frac{2}{3}$ Europe, $\frac{1}{2}$ West Coast of America	110,994
	New South Wales	Ditto	Launceston	
	Tasmania . . .	Hobart Town	Victoria	
	Launceston	Port Albert, New South Wales, Queensland, and half tonnage to India and China	
SWAN ISLAND AND GOOSE ISLAND	South Australia . . .	All ports of contributing colony	New South Wales, Queensland, New Zealand, South Sea Islands	38,225
	Victoria . . .	Ditto	Hobart Town, Southern Ports of Tasmania, $\frac{1}{2}$ Europe, New Zealand, $\frac{1}{2}$ West Coast of America	
	New South Wales	<i>Nil.</i>	<i>Nil.</i>	
CAPE OTWAY	Tasmania . . .	Hobart Town	Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia, Africa, Mauritius, and half tonnage to India and China	9,182
	Tasmania . . .	Launceston	Europe, New Zealand, West Coast of America	
	South Australia . . .	<i>Nil.</i>	<i>Nil.</i>	
	Victoria . . .	All ports of contributing Colony	South Australia, Western Australia, Africa, Mauritius, and half tonnage to India & China	
WILSON'S PROMONTORY..	New South Wales	Ditto	South Australia, Western Australia, Africa, Mauritius, and one-fourth tonnage to India and China	91,725
	Tasmania . . .	Ditto	South Australia, Western Australia, Africa, Mauritius, and one-fourth tonnage to India and China	
	South Australia . . .	Ditto	South Australia, Western Australia, Africa, Mauritius, and one-fourth tonnage to India and China	
	Victoria . . .	Ditto	South Australia, Western Australia, Africa, Mauritius, and one-fourth tonnage to India and China	
CAPE SCHANK	New South Wales	Ditto	South Australia, Western Australia, Africa, Mauritius, and one-fourth tonnage to India and China	62,650
	Tasmania . . .	Ditto	South Australia, Western Australia, Africa, Mauritius, and half tonnage to India & China	
	South Australia . . .	Ditto	Port Phillip and Eastern Ports, New South Wales, Queensland, Launceston, New Zealand, South Sea Islands	
	Victoria . . .	Ditto	New South Wales, Queensland, Europe, New Zealand, West Coast of America, Tasmania, and half tonnage to India and China	
GABO ISLAND...	New South Wales	Ditto	Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia, Africa, Mauritius, and one-fourth tonnage to India and China	454,109
	Tasmania . . .	Hobart Town	Port Phillip and Eastern Ports	
	South Australia . . .	All ports of contributing colony	<i>Nil.</i>	
	Victoria . . .	Ditto	New South Wales, Queensland, South Sea Islands	
CAPE WILLOUGHBY.	New South Wales	Ditto	Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia, Africa, Mauritius, Tasmania, and one-fourth tonnage to India and China	139,850
	Tasmania . . .	Ditto	New South Wales, Queensland, South Sea Islands, and half tonnage to India and China	
	South Australia . . .	Ditto	New South Wales, Queensland, South Sea Islands	
	Victoria . . .	Ditto	All Ports	
CAPE BORDA....	New South Wales	Ditto	Port Phillip	111,166
	Tasmania . . .	Ditto	Port Phillip	
	South Australia . . .	Ditto	Port Phillip	
	Victoria . . .	Ditto	Port Phillip	
M'DONNELL LIGHT, CAPE NORTHUMBERLAND.	New South Wales	Ditto	South Australia, Western Australia, Africa, Mauritius, and half tonnage to India & China	91,725
	Tasmania . . .	Ditto	South Australia, Western Australia, Africa, Mauritius, and one-fourth tonnage to India and China	
	South Australia . . .	Ditto	South Australia, Western Australia, Africa, Mauritius, and half tonnage to India & China	
	Victoria . . .	Ditto	Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, New Zealand, West Coast of America, South Sea Islands	
CAPE ST. GEORGE ..	Victoria . . .	Ditto	South Australia	79,875
	New South Wales	Ditto	South Australia	
	Tasmania . . .	Ditto	South Australia	
	South Australia . . .	Ditto	South Australia	
SOUTH HEAD LIGHT, SYDNEY	Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, Tasmania, New Zealand, West Coast of America, South Sea Islands			29,649
	Victoria . . .	Ditto	Spencer's Gulf	37,162
	New South Wales	Ditto	Spencer's Gulf	3,761
	Tasmania . . .	Ditto	Spencer's Gulf	64,044
CAPE BORDA....	Victoria . . .	Ditto	Europe, India, China, Africa, Mauritius, and Western Australia	47,192
	New South Wales	Ditto	New South Wales, Queensland	
	Tasmania . . .	Ditto	Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia, Africa, Mauritius, Tasmania, and one-fourth tonnage to India and China	
	South Australia . . .	Ditto	Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia, Africa, Mauritius, Tasmania, and one-fourth tonnage to India and China	
CAPE ST. GEORGE ..	Victoria . . .	Ditto	New South Wales, Queensland	149,899
	New South Wales	Ditto	New South Wales, Queensland	
	Tasmania . . .	Ditto	New South Wales, Queensland	
	South Australia . . .	Ditto	New South Wales, Queensland	
CAPE BORDA....	Victoria . . .	Ditto	All Ports	1,104,647
	New South Wales	Ditto	New South Wales, Queensland	
	Tasmania . . .	Ditto	New South Wales, Queensland	
	South Australia . . .	Ditto	New South Wales, Queensland	

* This column, showing the amount of Tonnage of Shipping in each Colony, was added to Table B. subsequently to the date of the Report of the Conference, and is referred to as "the column added in ink" in the Honorable Mr. Wilson's letters to the Colonial Secretary of New South Wales, dated the 14th February, 1865, and to the Chief Secretary of Victoria, dated 17th February, 1865.

CONFERENCE ON OCEAN LIGHTS.

PROCEEDINGS of the CONFERENCE appointed by the respective Governments of Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania, to reconsider the Report of the Commission appointed in the Year 1856; and to devise an equitable Adjustment of the Contributions payable by the several Colonies towards the Maintenance of the Highway or Ocean Lights.

Members of Conference present :—

Victoria.

The Honorable JAMES GOODALL FRANCIS, Commissioner of Trade and Customs.

South Australia.

The Honorable JOHN HART, Treasurer.

Tasmania.

The Honorable JAMES MILNE WILSON.

A first meeting of the Conference was held at the Custom House, Melbourne, on Wednesday, the 3rd February, 1864, at eleven o'clock, the Delegates of the above Colonies being present.

PROCEEDINGS OF CONFERENCE.

Moved by the Honorable Mr. Wilson, —That the Honorable Mr. Francis be Chairman of the Conference.

The following Papers were handed in :—

Letter from the Honorable the Colonial Secretary of Tasmania, appointing the Honorable Mr. Wilson Delegate to attend Conference on behalf of that Colony.

Telegram from the Honorable the Colonial Secretary of New South Wales, deputing the Honorable John Hart as exponent of the views of that Government at this Conference.

Letter from the Honorable the Chief Secretary of South Australia, appointing the Honorable Captain Hart Delegate to attend Conference on behalf of that Colony.

Papers handed in by the Honorable James Milne Wilson :—

1. Expenses of Light-houses in Tasmania in 1863.
2. Memorandum of the Cost of Erection of certain Light-houses.
3. Return of Departures from the Port of Hobart Town during 1863, with Vessels' Names, Tonnage, and Destination.
4. Return of Departures from the Port of Launceston during 1863, with Vessels' Names, Tonnage, and Destination.
5. Return of Arrivals at the Port of Hobart Town during 1863, with Vessels' Names, Tonnage, and Ports of Departure.
6. Return of Arrivals at the Port of Launceston during 1863, with Vessels' Names, Tonnage, and Ports of departure.
7. Return of Revenue received for Light Dues, and Tonnage of Shipping entered Inwards at the Customs, Hobart Town in 1863.
8. Return of Revenue derived from Light Dues, and Tonnage of Shipping entered Inwards at the Customs, Launceston, in 1863.
9. Account of all Moneys and Stores received and expended in 1863 on account of the Light-house Fund.
10. Exemptions from Light Dues, &c.
11. Report of Commissioners from New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania on Light-houses, 1856.

Papers handed in by the Honorable John Hart:—

1. Return showing Date of Erection, Cost of Construction, and Annual Maintenance of Light-houses, &c., in South Australia.
2. Return showing Names, Destination, Tonnage, &c., of Foreign and Intercolonial Vessels Outwards from Port Adelaide, 1863.
3. Return showing Names, Destination, Tonnage, &c., of Foreign and Intercolonial Vessels Outwards from South Australian Outports, 1863.
4. Return showing Names, Destination, Tonnage, &c., of Foreign and Intercolonial Vessels Inwards to Port Adelaide, 1863.
5. Return showing Names, Destination, Tonnage, &c., of Vessels Inwards to South Australian Ports, 1863.
6. Return showing Amount of Light Dues collected at Port Adelaide on Vessels Coastwise, 1863.
7. Return showing Total Amounts of Receipts and Expenditure on account of Lights in 1863.
8. Parliamentary Papers on subject of Light-houses.
9. Marine Board Act, 1860.
10. Bye-laws of Marine Board, Rates of Lights, Dues, &c.

Papers handed in by the Honorable Mr. Francis:—

1. Return of Expenditure on account of Light-houses, Harbour Lights, and Light Vessels for the Year 1863.
2. Return showing cost of Light-houses in Victoria, and the Annual Expenditure in Maintenance, Repairs, &c., since Erection to end of 1863.
3. Return of Number and Tonnage of Vessels Inwards and Outwards, at Melbourne, during the Year 1863, with an Account of the Tonnage collected during the same period.
4. Return of Number and Tonnage of Vessels Inwards and Outwards at Geelong during the Year 1863, with an Account of the Tonnage collected during the same period.
5. Return showing the Names of Vessels arrived at Portland, their Tonnage, Ports of Departure, and whither bound; also the Receipts on account of Tonnage during the Year 1863.
6. Return of the Number and Tonnage of Vessels Inwards and Outwards, at Port Fairy, during the Year 1863; also Amount of Tonnage Dues collected during the period.
7. Return showing the Number and Tonnage of Vessels Inwards and Outwards, at Port Albert, during the Year 1863, with an Account of the Tonnage collected during same period.
8. Return showing Number and Tonnage of Vessels Inwards and Outwards, at Warrnambool, in 1863, with Account of the Tonnage Fees collected during the period.
9. Return of the Tonnage Fees collected at the several Ports in Victoria during the year 1863.
10. Report of the Commissioners from New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania, on Light-houses, 1856, with Copies of Evidence taken.

The Honorable Mr. Wilson gave notice that he will move, at the next meeting of the Conference, the following series of Resolutions:—

1. That for the purposes of this Conference the following Light-houses shall be considered as Highway or Ocean Lights; viz.—

King's Island, Kent's Group, Swan Island, Goose Island.		Cape Schanck.
Cape Otway, Wilson's Promontory, Gabo Island.		Cape Northumberland, Cape Willoughby.
		Cape St. George, South Head Light.
2. That such Highway or Ocean Lights should be maintained at the joint expense of the following Colonies; viz., Victoria, New South Wales, Tasmania, South Australia, rateably in proportion to the tonnage of the shipping entered Inwards in each Colony deriving benefit from the same.
3. That the Colonies named in the last Resolution shall contribute to the Highway or Ocean Lights in accordance with the following scheme; viz.—

TABLE A.

LIGHT-HOUSE.	CONTRIBUTING COLONY.	ON TONNAGE OF ALL VESSELS ENTERED INWARDS.	
		From	At
KING'S ISLAND	Victoria . . .	Europe, United States, India, Cape of Good Hope, South Australia, China . . .	All ports of contributing colony
	New South Wales .	Europe, United States, India, Cape of Good Hope, South Australia, China . . .	Ditto
	Tasmania . . .	Europe, United States, India, Cape of Good Hope, South Australia, China . . .	Launceston
	South Australia .	Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland . . .	All ports of contributing colony
KENT'S GROUP	Victoria . . .	South America, New South Wales, New Zealand, Queensland, California . . .	Ditto
	New South Wales .	Europe, United States, India, Mauritius, South Australia, Victoria, China . . .	Ditto
	Tasmania . . .	Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland . . .	Ditto
	South Australia .	New South Wales, Queensland, California, New Zealand . . .	Ditto
SWAN ISLAND AND GOOSE ISLAND	Victoria . . .	New Zealand, California, Southern Ports of Tasmania . . .	Ditto
	New South Wales .	<i>Nil</i> —No vessel passing this light . . .	
	Tasmania . . .	Victoria . . .	Hobart Town
	South Australia .	New Zealand . . .	Launceston All ports of contributing colony
CAPE OTWAY	Victoria . . .	Europe, United States, India, China, Mauritius, Cape of Good Hope, South Australia . . .	Ditto
	New South Wales .	Europe, United States, India, China, Mauritius, Cape of Good Hope, South Australia . . .	Ditto
	Tasmania . . .	Europe, United States, India, China, Mauritius, Cape of Good Hope, South Australia . . .	Launceston
	South Australia .	Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, Tasmania, California, New Zealand . . .	All ports of contributing colony
WILSON'S PROMONTORY	Victoria . . .	United States, Queensland, Tasmania, New Zealand, South America, New South Wales, California . . .	Ditto
	New South Wales .	Europe, United States, India, Mauritius, China, Cape of Good Hope, South Australia, Victoria . . .	Ditto
	Tasmania . . .	Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland . . .	Ditto
	South Australia .	New South Wales, Queensland . . .	Ditto
GABO ISLAND	Victoria . . .	New South Wales, Queensland, California, South America, New Zealand, South Sea Islands . . .	Ditto
	New South Wales .	Europe, United States, India, Mauritius, China, Cape of Good Hope, Tasmania . . .	Ditto
	Tasmania . . .	New South Wales, Queensland . . .	Ditto
	South Australia .	New South Wales, Queensland, California, South America, New Zealand . . .	Ditto
CAPE SCHANK	Victoria . . .	All ports . . .	Ditto
	New South Wales .	Melbourne . . .	Ditto
	Tasmania . . .	Melbourne . . .	Ditto
	South Australia .	Melbourne . . .	Ditto
M'DONNELL LIGHT, CAPE NORTHUMBERLAND	Victoria . . .	South Australia, Western Australia . . .	Ditto
	New South Wales .	South Australia, Western Australia . . .	Ditto
	Tasmania . . .	South Australia, Western Australia . . .	Ditto
	South Australia .	Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, Tasmania, New Zealand, South America, California . . .	Ditto
CAPE WILLOUGHBY.	Victoria . . .	South Australia . . .	Ditto
	New South Wales .	South Australia . . .	Ditto
	Tasmania . . .	South Australia . . .	Ditto
	South Australia .	All ports . . .	Ditto
CAPE ST. GEORGE ..	Victoria . . .	New South Wales, South Sea Islands . . .	Ditto
	New South Wales .	All ports, except Queensland, & South Sea Islands . . .	Ditto
	Tasmania . . .	New South Wales, Queensland . . .	Ditto
	South Australia .	New South Wales, Queensland . . .	Ditto
SOUTH HEAD LIGHT, SYDNEY.....	Victoria . . .	Queensland, Sydney . . .	Ditto
	New South Wales .	All ports . . .	Ditto
	Tasmania . . .	Queensland, Sydney . . .	Ditto
	South Australia .	Queensland, Sydney . . .	Ditto

4. That as the Swan Island and Goose Island lights are indispensable to the shipping employed in the conveyance of the extensive and extraordinarily valuable homeward freights from Melbourne, and to the homeward bound ships from Launceston, the Colony of Victoria should contribute to those lights in proportion of one-third the tonnage entered outwards for ports in Europe, at the port of Melbourne; and Tasmania in proportion to the tonnage entered outwards for ports in Europe, from the port of Launceston.

5. That the proportionate contributions of the several colonies to the maintenance of the Ocean Lights shall be calculated upon the basis of the tonnage inwards in each colony in 1863, from and at the ports set forth in Table A, and upon the tonnage outwards at Melbourne and Launceston in 1863, for ports in Europe.
6. That the contributions calculated upon the basis stated in Resolution No. 5, shall be payable annually by each colony for a period of five years, commencing from 1st January, 1864.
7. That in consideration of the advantages enjoyed by the shipping trade to Queensland of the Ocean Lights, that colony should contribute one-half the tonnage entered inwards at her ports, to those lights, upon the basis that New South Wales contributes according to Table A.

The Honorable the Treasurer of South Australia gave notice that he would submit the following Motions to the Conference at the next meeting :—

1. That the Colonies of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania, and Queensland shall enter into an agreement for the erection of future and maintenance of present Ocean Lights within their respective territories, on the following terms; viz.—
2. All Ocean Lights on the seaboard of the said colonies to be maintained out of a general fund to be raised by a contribution from each colony in proportion to the amount of tonnage and the benefit derived from the lights by each ship entering into or departing from their ports from or to any colonial or foreign port or place.
3. That the principle upon which this contribution shall be calculated is, that as all vessels are presumed to benefit by such lights as are passed by them within a reasonable distance, in an ordinary passage between certain points, they shall pay for each light so presumed to be passed a fixed sum per ton of such vessels register tonnage.
4. That, as it is desirable the said lights should be self-supporting, the rate chargeable for each light be determined by a calculation based upon the returns of tonnage for the year 1863.
5. That if the proposed arrangement be agreed to, each colony shall furnish yearly an account of the sums disbursed for the maintenance of the lights within their control, and also a return of the sums charged or chargeable to the colony of the tonnage dues, and that thereupon an adjustment of the accounts between the Governments shall be made without delay, upon the understanding that each colony shall receive or pay, as the case may be, in proportion to the sum contributed by such colony.

At half-past three o'clock the Conference adjourned until Friday next, the 5th instant, at twelve o'clock noon.

EDWARD BLACK, *Secretary.*

FRIDAY, 5TH FEBRUARY, 1864.

The Conference met at twelve o'clock. All Members present.

Minutes of previous meeting were read and confirmed.

The Honorable Mr. Wilson moved :—

That permission may be granted him to substitute the following resolutions in lieu of those standing in his name, in order to accord and practically adopt the principle submitted by the Honorable the Treasurer of South Australia, viz., that contributions for the maintenance of Ocean Lights should be based on the tonnage inwards and outwards of vessels deriving benefit from the same. Agreed to.

- 1st. That for the purposes of this Conference the following Light-houses shall be considered as Highway or Ocean Lights; viz.—

King's Island,
Kent's Group,
Swan Island,
Goose Island.

Cape Otway,
Wilson's Promontory,
Gabo Island,
Cape Schank.

Cape Northumberland,
Cape Willoughby,
Cape Borda.

Cape St. George,
South Head, Sydney.

Agreed to.

- 2nd. That such Highway or Ocean Lights be maintained at the joint expense of the following colonies; namely, Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia, and Tasmania, rateably in proportion to the tonnage of the shipping entered inwards and outwards in each colony deriving benefit from the same. Agreed to.
- 3rd. That the Colonies named in the last Resolution shall contribute to the Highway or Ocean Lights in accordance with Tables to be prepared at this Conference, and to be marked A and B.

The Conference having deliberated upon a portion of Table A, adjourned at twenty minutes to five o'clock until twelve o'clock on Monday, the 8th instant.

EDWARD BLACK, *Secretary.*

MONDAY, 8TH FEBRUARY, 1864.

Conference met at twelve o'clock. All Members present.

Minutes of previous Meeting read and confirmed.

Letter from the Honorable the Colonial Secretary of Queensland handed in, expressing his regret that it is not in the power of that Government to depute one of its Members to attend this Conference, but promising to forward without delay certain returns for the use of Conference.

The Conference discussed proposed Tables A and B, and directed same to be printed for further consideration.

The Honorable Mr. Wilson moved the 4th and 5th Resolutions standing in his name :—

4. That the proportionate contributions of the Colonies, named in Resolution No. 2, to the maintenance of the Ocean Lights, shall be calculated upon the basis of the tonnage inwards and outwards in each Colony in 1863—for and at the ports set forth in Table A ; and at and from the ports set forth in Table B.
5. That the contributions, calculated upon the basis stated in Resolution No. 4, shall be payable annually, by each Colony named in Resolution No. 2, for a period of five years, commencing from 1st January, 1864.

Motions discussed—put and negatived.

Moved by the Honorable John Hart :—

1. That as it is desirable the said lights should be self-supporting, the rate chargeable for each light shall, in the first instance, be determined by a calculation based upon the returns of tonnage for the year 1863.
2. That if the proposed arrangement be agreed to, each Colony shall furnish yearly an account of the sums disbursed for the maintenance of the lights within their control, and also a return of the sums charged or chargeable to the Colony for the said light dues ; and that thereupon an adjustment of the accounts between the Governments shall be made without delay, upon the understanding that each Colony shall receive or pay, as the case may be, in proportion to the sum contributed by such Colony in the preceding year, calculated in accordance with Tables A and B.

Agreed to.

The Honorable Mr. Francis gave notice that he would move the following Resolutions at next meeting of Conference :—

1. That a scale of charges be prepared, in accordance with Tables A and B, for each Colony, based upon an uniform charge of one half-penny per ton for each Ocean Light, subject to the following conditions :—
2. That for the purpose of intercolonial adjustment of accounts, no additions, exemptions, or abatement be allowed except by general consent ; and that on vessels trading between the aforesaid Colonies, no more than one charge in, and one charge out, shall be made for any single light within one calendar month ; and that payment by vessels so employed at any one of the said Colonies shall clear any such light for one month from date of such payment ; and further, that on vessels engaged in the coasting trade, in any Colony, but a single charge in, and a single charge out, shall be made in like manner within a period of two months.
3. That a treaty, based upon these Resolutions, is hereby recommended to be entered upon by the Governments represented by us, and to be extended over a period of five years from 1st January, 1864.

Conference adjourned at half-past five o'clock P.M. until eleven o'clock A.M. on Wednesday, the 10th instant.

EDWARD BLACK, *Secretary*.

WEDNESDAY, 10TH FEBRUARY, 1864.

Conference met at eleven o'clock.

Minutes of previous meeting read and confirmed.

Letters from the Honorable the Colonial Secretary, Sydney, and the Honorable the Colonial Secretary, Tasmania, with reference to documents to be furnished for information of Conference, handed in and read.

The Honorable Mr. Francis moved the adoption of the Resolutions standing in his name. Resolutions discussed and agreed to.

Tables A and B further discussed and agreed to as amended.

[See Tables A and B as amended, *antè*, pages 8 and 9.]

Conference adjourned at two P.M. until three P.M. on Thursday, the 11th instant.

EDWARD BLACK, *Secretary*.

THURSDAY, 11TH FEBRUARY, 1864.

Conference met at half-past Two o'clock. All Members present.

Minutes of previous Meeting read and confirmed.

Moved by the Honorable John Hart:—That a Report of the proceedings and of the result of this Conference be prepared for adoption. Agreed to.

Conference adjourned at twenty minutes to four o'clock P.M. until eleven o'clock A.M. on Saturday, the 13th instant.

EDWARD BLACK, *Secretary.*

SATURDAY, 13TH FEBRUARY, 1864.

Conference met at eleven o'clock. All Members present.

Minutes of previous Meeting read and confirmed.

Report of Conference submitted, considered, amended, and signed.

Conference rose at Twelve o'clock.

EDWARD BLACK, *Secretary.*

STATEMENT showing the Tonnage of Shipping of Victoria, New South Wales, and Tasmania benefited by Tasmanian "Highway" Lights, the Cost of Maintenance of such Lights in 1863, and the proportionate Contributions of the above Colonies for that Year, on the Basis of the Arrangement of Re-distribution proposed by the Government of Tasmania.

Light-houses.	Contributing Colony.	Tonnage, Inwards and Outwards, 1863.	Total Tonnage.	Exact proportionate Charge for each Colony for 1863.	Cost of Maintenance of Light-houses for 1863.	Per-centage on Cost chargeable to each Colony.	Proportion for each Colony deduced from Per-centage.
KING'S ISLAND	Victoria.....	320,831 Inwards	412,556	£ s. d. 550 12 8½	£ s. d. 861 18 4	64 per cent.	£ s. d. 551 12 6½
		91,725 Outwards					
	New South Wales	161,611 Inwards	224,261	299 6 4½		34 per cent.	293 1 0
		62,650 Outwards					
	Tasmania.....	3824 Inwards	8963	11 19 3		2 per cent.	17 4 9½
		5139 Outwards					
KENT'S GROUP	Victoria.....	122,131 Inwards	233,125	448 12 4	863 7 3	52 per cent.	448 19 0¼
		110,994 Outwards					
	New South Wales	164,450 Inwards	169,424	326 0 7¾		37 per cent.	319 8 10
		4974 Outwards					
	Tasmania.....	35,635 Inwards	46,100	88 14 3¼		11 per cent.	94 19 4½
		10,465 Outwards					
SWAN ISLAND AND GOOSE ISLAND.....	Victoria.....	40,188 Inwards	232,866	966 4 5¾	1102 2 2	87 per cent.	958 16 8
		192,478 Outwards					
	New South Wales..	Nil.	Nil.	..		13 per cent.	143 5 6
	Tasmania.....	23,539 Inwards	32,721	135 17 8¼			
9182 Outwards							

TASMANIA.

Colonial Secretary's Office, 17th February, 1865.

SIR,

THE Government of Tasmania has viewed with much regret the failure of the Conference held in Melbourne in February last year, on the subject of Australian Highway Light-houses, to provide a remedy for the injustice which has been experienced by Tasmania since 1856, in the maintenance of a very inequitable system of joint contribution to those Light-houses by all the Australian Colonies.

But since it has been found impossible to combine the Colonies of Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia, and Tasmania in a common scheme for the joint maintenance of all the Light-houses that formed the subject of the discussions of the Conference, the Government of Tasmania is determined to make another effort to secure a re-adjustment on more equitable terms of the existing scale of contributions by Victoria and New South Wales to the four Lights on King's Island, Kent's Group, Goose Island, and Swan Island.

With this view, I have now the honor to lay before the Government of Victoria a scheme for the joint support of the four Lights just named by the Colonies of Victoria, New South Wales, and Tasmania.

I propose that these four Lights shall be maintained on the principles laid down as applicable to all the Light-houses described as "Highway or Ocean Lights" in paragraph 4 of the Report of the Conference of February, 1864,—principles which, I understand, were fully recognised and acquiesced in by the Honorable Mr. Francis with the concurrence of the Government of Victoria, at that Conference.

Those principles as agreed to by the Conference are thus enunciated in paragraphs 5 and 7 of the Report:—

That such Highway or Ocean Lights shall be maintained at the joint expense of Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia, and Tasmania, rateably in proportion to the tonnage of the shipping cleared outwards and entered inwards in each of the said Colonies; and

That the rate payable by each Colony shall be in the first instance determined by a calculation based upon the returns of tonnage for the year 1863.

The Government of Tasmania propose to apply these principles to the maintenance by the Colonies of Victoria, New South Wales, and Tasmania of the Light-houses on King's Island, Kent's Group, and Swan and Goose Islands, as follows:—

1. That the tonnage of shipping entered inwards and cleared outwards at ports of the three contributing Colonies, according to Tables A and B appended to the Report of the Conference, shall be taken as shown by the Returns furnished to the Conference for the year 1863.
2. That the expense of the four Light-houses shall be taken at the ascertained cost of maintenance by the Government of Tasmania from year to year.
3. That the cost of maintenance so ascertained shall be distributed amongst the three contributors rateably in proportion to tonnage of shipping in each Colony, in terms of Article 1.
4. That this scheme of joint contributions to the four Light-houses shall take effect retrospectively from the 1st January, 1864, and continue in force until the 31st December, 1868.

I enclose you a copy of Tables A. and B. appended to the Report of the Conference of February, 1864, with columns added, in ink, showing the tonnage of shipping in each Colony benefited in 1863 by the existence of the "Highway or Ocean Lights," compiled since the close of the Conference in the Department of Ports and Harbours of Victoria, from Returns furnished by the several Governments of Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia, and Tasmania.*

I also enclose you a tabular statement, showing the cost of maintenance of the four Tasmanian Light-houses in 1863, and exhibiting what would have been the proportionate charge to each of the three contributors in that year on the basis of the scheme now proposed.†

It will be seen from that statement that New South Wales is required by this scheme to contribute to the Lights on King's Island and Kent's Group in the ratio of 34 per cent. and 37 per cent. respectively; and that Victoria is called upon to contribute 64 per cent. of the cost of the King's Island Light, 52 per cent. of the cost of the Kent's Group Light, and 87 per cent. of the cost of the Lights on Swan and Goose Islands.

* See *antè*, pages 8 and 9.

† See *antè*, page 15.

The cost of maintenance of these Light-houses will probably vary from year to year, but by the proposed arrangement none of the contributaries will be required to pay in any year a larger proportion of the actual expenditure on each Light than the per-centage shown in the appended statement.

I cannot conceive it to be necessary to offer any arguments or suggestions by way of apology or excuse for the increased contributions required by the proposed scheme from the Colony of Victoria.

The recognition by the Government of Victoria of the principles so clearly laid down in the Report of the Conference of February, 1864, must ensure its acquiescence in an arrangement which is based entirely upon those principles, and proposes to carry out, with respect to four Light-houses situated within the territory of Tasmania, the recommendations of the Report for the joint support of the Coast Light-houses of the Australian Colonies.

But, in order that the Government of Victoria may understand the views entertained by the Advisers of His Excellency Colonel Gore Browne as to the relative duties and mutual obligations of the Colonies benefited by the existence of the Australian "Highway Lights" situate within the Territory of Tasmania, I subjoin an extract from a communication I have addressed to the Colonial Secretary of New South Wales, on the same subject, under date the 12th December, 1864:—

"In consequence of the failure of the last Conference to secure an equitable adjustment of the contributions of the several Colonies towards the maintenance of the whole system of Australian Coast Light-houses, the Government of Tasmania will confine its proposals to the two Light-houses I have named above (King's Island and Kent's Group), which are absolutely indispensable to the safe navigation of ships trading between ports in New South Wales and Europe, the Eastern Coast of America, India, Africa, South Australia, Western Australia, China, Mauritius, and the Port of Launceston.

The Colonies of New South Wales and Tasmania contribute under the existing arrangement in equal proportions to the Light-houses on King's Island and Kent's Group; but the advantages derived from these Lights by ships sailing to and from ports in Tasmania are quite incommensurate with the extent to which the Colony is charged for their maintenance.

The Shipping trade of Tasmania, so inconsiderable when compared with that of the Colonies of New South Wales and Victoria, can ill support the burdens which the Legislature is now compelled to impose upon it for the maintenance of these Light-houses under the present system.

The Government of Victoria fully admits the injustice of the existing arrangement in its operation upon the Shipping trade and Public Revenue of Tasmania, and is willing to accede to any reasonable suggestion for the re-adjustment of the proportionate contributions of the two Colonies to the support of the Light-houses now under consideration.

The Government of New South Wales must be prepared to admit its equitable obligations in the same direction, and I trust that the terms which I shall on a future occasion propose for your acceptance will approve themselves to your sense of what is reasonable and just.

But, under any circumstances, the existing state of things cannot be permitted to continue to the injury and disadvantage of the Colony; and should it be found impossible to re-adjust the proportionate contributions towards Tasmanian Light-houses of the Colonies which profit most largely by their maintenance, the Government of Tasmania will be reluctantly compelled to consider the propriety of discontinuing their use altogether.

In that case the responsibility of depriving the Commerce of Australia of the immense advantages of the Light-houses on King's Island and at Kent's Group must necessarily rest with that Colony which declines to recognize its legitimate obligations to contribute to their maintenance."

I trust that the Government of Victoria will admit the correctness of these views, and will be ready to entertain the present proposals as a fair and equitable rearrangement of the scheme of joint contribution towards the cost of the Light-houses under consideration.

Those Light-houses are, practically, isolated ocean beacons, provided for the safety and protection of Australian Commerce. The accidental circumstance of their situation on Tasmanian territory cannot deprive them of the character ascribed to them by the Report of the Conference of February, 1864, of "Highway or Ocean Lights;" and I feel convinced that, after a dispassionate consideration of the whole surrounding circumstances of this question, the reasonableness of the proposal to distribute the cost of maintenance amongst the three contributaries in proportion to the amount of Shipping of each benefited by the existence of the Light-houses, will approve itself to the sense of justice of the Government of Victoria, as it combines the suffrages of the Delegates of all the Colonies represented at the Conference.

I have communicated these proposals to the Government of New South Wales, which I hope to find prepared to acquiesce in the suggested arrangement.

I hope to receive an early communication of the views of the Government of Victoria on a subject of much importance to the commerce of all the Colonies concerned, and possessing a special interest to the Revenue and Shipping Trade of Tasmania.

You will observe that the proposal that the new arrangement should continue in force until the 31st December, 1868, is based upon the concluding recommendation of the Report of the Delegates at the Conference of February, 1864; namely—

“That a Treaty based upon the principles agreed to by the Conference be entered into by the respective Governments, such Treaty to extend over a period of five years from the 1st January, 1864.”

I have, &c.

JAMES MILNE WILSON,
Pro Colonial Secretary, (absent).

The Hon. the Chief Secretary, Victoria.

VICTORIA.

Chief Secretary's Office, Melbourne, 6th March, 1865.

SIR,

WITH reference to previous correspondence on the subject of the maintenance of Intercolonial Light-houses, I have the honor to transmit, for the information of the Government of Tasmania, copies of Returns received from the Governments of New South Wales and Queensland relating to Lights, Shipping, &c., together with the accompanying Statements showing the aggregate Tonnage of Vessels entered inwards and cleared outwards in the several Colonies of New South Wales, Tasmania, South Australia, and Victoria during the year 1863.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

J. MOORE,
For Chief Secretary.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Tasmania.

TASMANIA.

Colonial Secretary's Office, 15th March, 1865.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 6th instant, transmitting, for the information of the Government of this Colony, copies of Returns received from the Governments of New South Wales and Queensland relating to Light-houses, Shipping, &c., together with a Statement appended to Tables A and B of the Report of the Conference on Ocean Light-houses, showing the aggregate amount of Tonnage of Vessels entered inwards and cleared outwards in the several contributing Colonies referred to in the Report.

As the Government of Queensland declined to send a representative to the Conference above referred to, the Returns furnished by that Colony are not available for any practical use at present; but I concur with the concluding observations in the Memorandum of the Chief Harbour Master of Victoria appended to them; namely, “that they can be kept as records for future use, should Tables A and B of the Report be revised.”

I shall be glad to be favoured with a reply to my letter addressed to you under date the 17th ultimo, on the subject of the re-adjustment of contributions for the maintenance of Light-houses situated in Banks' and Bass's Straits.

I have, &c.

JAMES MILNE WILSON,
Pro Colonial Secretary.

The Honorable the Chief Secretary, Victoria.

VICTORIA.

Chief Secretary's Office, Melbourne, 12th April, 1865.

SIR,

WITH reference to your letter of the 15th ultimo, No. 503, I have the honor to inform you that, the subject thereof having received the attention of this Government, it is admitted that the sum contributed by Tasmania towards the maintenance of the four Lights alluded to by you is excessive.

This Government is prepared to entertain favourably any proposition for the re-adjustment on a more equitable basis of the several amounts contributed by the respective Colonies, provided the Government of Tasmania can induce the other Colonial Governments to concur therein.

Your Despatch, though recognising the principles entertained by the Conference held in February, 1864, as far as relieving Tasmania of the expense of maintaining such Lights, does not contain any suggestion with regard to contributions towards the expenses of the other Ocean Lights which, in common with those of Tasmania, were to be maintained rateably by the Colonies named in the margin* in proportion to the tonnage of the shipping entered inwards and cleared outwards at each respectively.

Calculations somewhat hastily made, and for this reason perhaps susceptible of amendment, appear to show the amount which each Colony should contribute towards the maintenance of the Highway or Ocean Lights to be—

Victoria about	£4500
New South Wales	3000
South Australia	2220
Tasmania	500

These calculations are for the maintenance of the Lights detailed in the 4th paragraph of the Report of the recent Conference, and they have been made on the basis of the tonnage of the year 1863, since which time, however, the trade between New Zealand and Victoria has considerably dwindled away.

In conclusion, I would add that this Government, impressed with the advisability of some scheme being devised for the equitable settlement of the question, and fully acquiescing in the principles laid down in the Conference's Report, will be glad to learn that the Government of Tasmania has succeeded in obtaining the co-operation of the other Colonies in carrying out those principles, and arriving at a decision on this subject which shall be satisfactory to the whole of the Colonies interested.

I have the honor to be
Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

J. MOORE, *for Chief Secretary.*

The Honorable the Colonial Secretary, Tasmania.

TASMANIA.

Colonial Secretary's Office, 23rd May, 1865.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated the 12th ultimo, in which you state that the subject of my letter of the 15th April "having received the attention of the Victorian Government, it is admitted that the sum contributed by Tasmania towards the maintenance of the four Lights alluded to in my former letter is excessive;" and that the Victorian Government "is prepared to entertain favourably any proposition for a re-adjustment, on a more equitable basis, of the several amounts contributed by the respective Colonies, provided the Government of Tasmania can induce the other Colonial Governments to concur therein."

I am glad to receive the renewed admission of the injustice inflicted on Tasmania by the present arrangement. But I can only regard the offer to consent to a re-adjustment of the Tasmanian Light-house contribution contingently upon the concurrence of "the other Colonial Governments" as an evasion of the legitimate and admitted obligations of Victoria.

It is known to the Government of Victoria that the terms of contribution to the Australian Highway Lights agreed upon at the Conference held in Melbourne in February, 1864, have not been ratified by the Governments represented on that occasion.

The proposals contained in my letter of the 17th February last were avowedly made for the protection of Tasmanian interests alone, so far as the four Lights named in the margin† are concerned, in consequence of the failure of the Conference to secure a definitive adjustment of the whole scheme of Australian Light-house contributions.

But the Government of Tasmania has always been ready and anxious for the settlement of these contributions on "the principles recognised by the Conference held in February, 1864." Pending such a settlement, I have proposed to the Governments of Victoria and New South Wales to increase their contributions to Light-houses on Tasmanian territory on terms which must be admitted to be at once intelligible and equitable.

* New South Wales, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria.

† King's Island, Kent's Group, Swan Island, Goose Island.

The figures set forth on the Tabular Statement appended to my letter of the 14th February last are the result of careful and precise calculations, based upon official Returns supplied by the Governments represented at the last Light-house Conference.

That Table shows what amounts should be contributed by Victoria and New South Wales towards the maintenance of Tasmanian Lights, "rateably in proportion to the Tonnage of Shipping entered inwards and cleared outwards at the ports of each respectively."

According to those calculations, Victoria has contributed to Tasmanian Light-houses, from 1858 to 1863 inclusively, less by £7961 6s. 5d. than her just and proper share of the cost of their maintenance for the common benefit of Australian commerce.

Your letter of the 12th ultimo estimates, on "calculations hastily made," the proportionate annual contributions of Tasmania to "the maintenance of the Lights detailed in the 4th paragraph of the Report of the recent Conference at £500."

Without admitting the accuracy of that estimate, I may state that Tasmania has expended annually since 1858, and for many previous years, a sum more than equal to three times that amount upon the four Lights alone which form the special subject of this correspondence. I append a Comparative Statement showing this result.

I cannot admit that the non-concurrence of the other Colonial Governments in the equitable scheme of contribution to the Australian Highway Lights, agreed to by the Conference, can relieve Victoria from her just obligation to the support of the Lights on Tasmanian territory.

I am compelled to remind you that the Tasmanian contribution to the Lights on King's Island and Kent's Group, which it is admitted is "excessive," was fixed in 1856 at a rate altogether disproportionate to the advantages derived from those Lights by Tasmanian Shipping, as compared with the Shipping benefited by their existence trading to the ports of the other Australian Colonies.

Tasmania since 1858 has contributed, as I have already stated, some £8000 more than her just proportion of the cost of the Lights on Bass's and Banks' Straits, and has, in addition, erected entirely at her own cost the Lights on Swan and Goose Islands, to which no other Australian Colony has ever yet contributed.

To the importance of these two last-named Lights to the Commerce of Australia the Government has recently received valuable and independent testimony.

Commander Parkin, of Her Majesty's Ship *Falcon*, who was specially commissioned, under instructions from the Lords of the Admiralty, to visit and inspect the Australian Light-houses, has just reported to this Government upon the state of the Lights in Bass's and Banks' Straits; and in suggesting certain alterations and improvements in the Lights on Swan and Goose Islands, thus speaks of their usefulness and value:—"I consider that the Goose and Swan are two very important Lights, marking the entrances to Banks' Strait, which is every year more used, and in which lie many dangers, and strong tidal currents. *No doubt those Colonies which benefit by them would share the expense with Tasmania.*"

Under these circumstances, I am induced to hope that the Government of Victoria will reconsider the decision conveyed to me in your letter of the 12th ultimo, and consent to increase its contribution to the four Lights in Bass's and Banks' Straits on the equitable basis proposed in my former communications, independently of the course now or which may hereafter be pursued by the "other Colonial Governments." And I would remind you that, while Tasmania is powerless to exact any contributions from Shipping using her Lights but not entering her Ports, the Legislature of Victoria can reimburse the Treasury of that Colony by levying dues on ships passing Tasmanian Lights, and entering Victorian Ports, to the full extent of the augmented contribution which would satisfy our reasonable demands, and fulfil your legitimate obligations.

In conclusion, I would again draw your attention to the statement of the views and intentions of this Government on the question at issue between Tasmania and "the other Colonial Governments," as set forth in my letter to the Colonial Secretary of New South Wales, dated the 12th December, 1864, from which I supplied you with an extract in my letter of 17th February last.

I must repeat that this Government cannot allow the existing arrangements to continue to the injury and disadvantage of Tasmania.

The responsibility, in that case, of the discontinuance of the Lights which now protect Australian Commerce from the dangers and difficulties of Bass's and Banks' Straits—an alternative on which this Government is fully resolved—must rest upon those Colonies which persist in repudiating their proper and admitted obligations.

The importance of the subject, and the near approach of the Session of the Legislature, induce me to request that you will favour me with a reply to this communication at your earliest convenience.

I have the honor to be,
Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

JAMES MILNE WILSON,

Pro Colonial Secretary.

The Honorable the Chief Secretary, Victoria.

COMPARATIVE Statement showing the Actual Contributions to Bass's Straits Lights by Victoria from 1858 to 1863 inclusive; the Amount chargeable to Victoria for Lights in Bass's and Banks' Straits on the Basis of the Proposals of the Tasmanian Government, 17th February, 1865; the Amount chargeable to Tasmania for "Australian Highway Lights" on the Basis of Mr. Moore's Letter, 12th April, 1865; and the Amount actually expended by Tasmania upon the Lights in Banks' and Bass's Straits during the same Period.

	<i>Victorian Contributions to King's Island and Kent's Group.</i>	<i>Victorian Contributions according to Scale proposed in Mr. Wilson's Letter, 17th February, 1865, to King's Island and Kent's Group.</i>	<i>Tasmanian Contributions to Australian Highway Lights (per 4 Paragraph of Conference Report), as estimated in Mr. Moore's Letter 12th April, 1865.</i>	<i>Actual Expenditure by Tasmanian Government on the 4 Lights on Tasmanian Territory in Bass's and Banks' Straits.</i>
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
1858	315 19 3	1601 14 2	500 0 0	1591 16 8
1859	298 17 4	1489 18 3	500 0 0	1476 0 7
1860	305 17 5	1455 11 10	500 0 0	1431 2 7
1861	713 1 11	2057 1 8	500 0 0	1723 9 3
1862	895 2 11	2646 3 3	500 0 0	2231 0 4
1863	718 14 11	1958 11 0	500 0 0	1605 7 6
	£3247 13 9	11,209 0 2	3000 0 0	10,058 16 11

TASMANIA.

Colonial Secretary's Office, 23rd May, 1865.

SIR,

REFERRING to my letters dated respectively the 12th December, 1864, and the 14th February in this year, I have the honor to request that you will acquaint me, with as little delay as possible, with the definite intentions of the Government of New South Wales on the subject of an augmented contribution from that Colony to the cost of the Australian Highway Light-houses situated on Tasmanian territory.

My letters already referred to have proposed the adoption of a reasonable and equitable revision of the present scale of contribution to those Light-houses by New South Wales and Victoria, based upon the principles laid down by the Light-house Conference of 1864.

The additional charge which those proposals would throw upon New South Wales in the first instance would not exceed £100, as stated in my last communication on this subject; nor is it likely that that sum would be appreciably augmented in any future year under the scheme of contribution proposed by this Government. I cannot, therefore, suppose that financial considerations would interpose any obstacles to the admission of so small an additional charge.

But an important principle is involved in the recognition of this claim on the part of Tasmania. This Colony has too long maintained the Light-houses in question for the benefit of Australian Commerce, at a cost altogether disproportionate to the advantages they afford to her own Shipping.

The inequality of the present system of contribution, and its peculiar injustice to Tasmania, have been fully and distinctly admitted by the several Colonies represented at the Intercolonial Conferences of 1863 and 1864.

The Government of Tasmania is prepared at all times to accede to a scheme of Light-house contribution based upon the principles affirmed by the Report of the Conference of 1864.

Pending the acceptance by all the Colonies interested of the terms agreed upon by that Conference, the Government of Tasmania proposes the adoption of the scheme submitted for your consideration in my last letter.

I cannot admit the equity or expediency of postponing the enforcement of the just claims of Tasmania until the whole of the Australian Colonies can be brought to concur in a scheme of Light-house contribution.

It is impossible that this Colony can submit any longer to the injustice and disadvantage inflicted upon her Revenue and Shipping by the existing Light-house arrangements between Tasmania and the continental Colonies.

The Light-houses on Tasmanian territory are indispensable to the safety of Australian Commerce; and this Government is in a position to compel the acceptance by the other Colonies of the reasonable terms I now offer to you, by discontinuing their use as ocean beacons.

The Advisers of His Excellency Colonel Gore Browne are prepared, in the event of non-compliance with their present reasonable demands, to throw the responsibility of the discontinuance of the Lights in Bass's and Banks' Straits on the Governments of those Colonies which decline to recognise and fulfil their legitimate obligations.

I have the honor to be,
Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,
JAMES MILNE WILSON,
Pro Colonial Secretary.

The Hon. Colonial Secretary, New South Wales.

*Colonial Secretary's Office, Sydney,
New South Wales, 6th June, 1865.*

SIR,

WITH reference to your letter of the 23rd ultimo, I have the honor to transmit the copy of a Communication which I addressed to the Chief Secretary of Victoria, on the 30th May, on the subject of the maintenance of the Intercolonial Light-houses.

I have the honor to be,
Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,
CHARLES COWPER.

*The Honorable the Colonial Secretary of Tasmania,
Hobart Town.*

(COPY.)

The Treasury, New South Wales, 13th May, 1865.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge receipt of your Blank Cover of 14th March last, under which you forwarded to me a letter of 8th of same month from the Chief Secretary, Melbourne, transmitting certain Statistics in connection with the subject of Intercolonial Light-houses, accompanied by a Report of a Conference thereon which was held at Melbourne so far back as the month of February, 1864, by Delegates from Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania,—the Honorable Mr. Hart, the South Australian Delegate, having been authorised to give full information as to the views of this Government on the subject of the said Conference.

With reference thereto, I enclose Report which I have received from the Superintendent of Pilots, Lights, and Harbours. It appears that the original intention of the movers in the Conference above mentioned was to arrange for the maintenance of the "Highway Lights" along the coasts of the Australian Continent; and it was proposed that the expense of such maintenance should be borne by the several Colonies, each contributing thereto in proportion to its interest in the Intercolonial Shipping. Queensland, however, for reasons that are not apparent, declined to take any part in the Conference, or to contribute her share of the expense. This would impose upon the Colony of New South Wales the entire cost of the Northern Highway Lights, whilst at the same time she is called upon to contribute to the maintenance of all the Highway Lights in the Southern Colonies. It is evident that Queensland, being equally interested with this Colony in fostering the large trade that is carried on between the two, is equitably bound to give

her aid in securing the necessary protection to the shipping, which is involved in maintaining the Northern Highway Lights; and, in view of the increasing traffic between *the other Colonies* and Queensland, Victoria, Tasmania, and South Australia, ought likewise to bear a fair proportion of the expense thereof. Without these conditions no system would be complete, and each Colony must be left to support the Lights situated exclusively in its own Territory.

With reference to the proposal contained in the 9th paragraph of the Report of the Conference, for the collection of Light Dues, it is thought that the shipping interest would cheerfully bear such an impost, if by that means an extension of Lights (which is felt to be of great necessity) could be secured. Looking, moreover, to the great expense to which this country is put for that purpose, and to the fact that the abolition of Light Dues, which were at one time collected in this harbour, was resorted to for the purpose of attracting the whale fishery and securing the benefits of the trade to Sydney,—a trade which has now almost ceased to exist,—it does appear not unfair that vessels deriving advantage from the present large expenditure under this head—an expenditure which is sought to be considerably increased—should be taxed to meet that expenditure to some extent.

I forward to you likewise a further Report from the Superintendent of Pilots, Lights, and Harbours in connection with this subject, but having more especial reference to a separate correspondence with the Government of Tasmania, respecting certain Light-houses in which that Colony is chiefly interested. It contains also a proposal for the adjustment of the question, in the event of the recommendations made by the Conference failing to meet the concurrence of the several Colonies concerned; and it is to be hoped that an equitable settlement may speedily be arrived at, particularly when it is remembered that New South Wales has been, and is at the present time, paying considerably more than her fair proportion in maintaining the Lights which are beyond the limits even of her *own* territory.

I have the honor to be,
Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

(Signed) T. W. SMART.

The Honorable the Colonial Secretary.

(COPY.)

*Office of Superintendent of Pilots, Lights, and Harbours,
Sydney, 8th March, 1865.*

Superintendent's Report in obedience to Treasury Minute, 4th March, 1865.

I do not understand on what plea South Australian ships should be excused in contributing to the maintenance of the Lights in Bass's Straits. As far as Victoria, Tasmania, and New South Wales are concerned, I consider the proposal of Tasmania fair enough; and were South Australia included, would respectfully urge it on the favourable consideration of this Government. At the same time, I beg to point out that New South Wales contributes one half to the maintenance of the Wilson's Promontory and Gabo Island Lights, both of which are situated on Victorian Territory, whilst the Returns accompanying these papers clearly show that the shipping of New South Wales are not benefited proportionately.

In the event of the Scheme of the Delegates of 1864 not being carried into effect, it appears to me that the most practical and equitable way of adjusting the matter would be—

That each Colony should support the Lights situated on its own (main) Territory.

That when a Light is situated near the line of demarcation of two Colonies (like Gabo Island, for instance), it should be equally supported by the two Colonies near whose limits it is exhibited.

And that the Lights in Bass's Straits should be supported in accordance with the proposal of the Tasmanian Government; (though I think South Australia should be called on to bear her share).

In conclusion, I beg to point out that this Government is almost, if not equally, interested with that of Tasmania in obtaining an equitable settlement of the question, as we pay considerably more than our proper share in maintaining the Lights which are situated outside our limits.

(Signed) FRANCIS HIXSON.

(COPY.)

*Office of Superintendent of Pilots, Lights, and Harbours,
Sydney, 25th April, 1865.*

I MUST premise my Report on the result of the Conference held by the Delegates of Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania, at Melbourne, in February, 1864, by stating that the Minute dated 8th of March, enclosed herewith, had reference altogether to the order I received to report on the proposal of the Tasmanian Government,—which is, in point of fact, only a curtailed portion of the general scheme embraced by the Delegates.

The original intention of the movers of the Conference would appear to be, that South Australia, Victoria, Tasmania, New South Wales, and Queensland should each, proportionately with their interest, share the burden of maintaining the Highway Lights. When, therefore, Queensland declines to take her portion, New South Wales—her contiguous neighbour—necessarily becomes burdened with an undue share, from the fact of a large trade beneficial to both Colonies existing, whilst the one—New South Wales—has to bear the entire cost of her Northern Highway Lights, at the same time being called on to contribute to all the Highway Lights in the Southern Colonies. To make the Scheme equable, “I consider that Queensland should be included in the system.”

With reference to paragraph 4 of the Report, I do not understand why the Newcastle Light should be excluded. Newcastle Light is not exclusively a Harbour Light. There is a sum on the Supplementary Estimates of 1864 for erecting Harbour Lights for Newcastle; and no light on the entire coast of Australia is so generally beneficial to South Australian, Victorian, and Tasmanian Ships as is the one at Newcastle. “I consider Newcastle Light should be classed as a Highway Light in the Report of the Conference of 1864.”

Paragraphs 5, 6, 7, and 8 appear to be well considered, and would, I think, work beneficially were the whole of the Colonies included, and the Lights fairly classed.

Regarding Paragraph 9, I find that at one time Light Dues were collected in Sydney, but were abolished, I believe, with a view of rendering the Port more attractive to the many whalers that formerly cruised in the South Pacific. No such policy is necessary for attracting these ships now: indeed, the whale fishery may almost be said to have ceased to exist. Light Dues can scarcely be said to be a tax, and would, I believe, be cheerfully borne by the shipping rather than that they should longer be deprived of the extension of Lights that are so urgently required on our coast. The Colony expends at present, in round numbers, about £6500 yearly in support of Lights, without taxing the ships that benefit by so large an expenditure.

Paragraphs 10 and 11 would be quite consistent in carrying out the general Scheme proposed.

(Signed) FRANCIS HIXSON,
Superintendent Pilots, Lights, and Harbours.

The Under Secretary for Finance.

TASMANIA.

Colonial Secretary's Office, 13th June, 1865.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 6th instant, purporting “to transmit a copy of a Communication which” you had “addressed to the Chief Secretary of Victoria, on the 30th May, on the maintenance of the Intercolonial Light-houses,” (which, however, has not been forwarded), and enclosing a letter from the Honorable Mr. Smart, together with two Memorandums by the Superintendent of Pilots, Lights, and Harbours, New South Wales, on the Report of the Conference of 1864 and the recent proposals of this Government.

In the Communication received I can discover no expression of the views entertained by the Government of New South Wales on the subject of the specific proposal by this Government as to the joint maintenance of Lights in Banks' and Bass's Straits by New South Wales, Victoria, and Tasmania.

But I observe that the Report of the Superintendent of Pilots, Lights, and Harbours, dated the 8th March last, speaks of the proposals on that head of this Government as follows:—“As far as Victoria, Tasmania, and New South Wales are concerned, I consider the proposal of Tasmania fair enough; and were South Australia included, would respectfully urge it on the favourable consideration of this Government.”

The same Report also recommends,—“in the event of the Scheme of the Delegates of 1864 not being carried into effect, that the Lights in Bass's Straits should be supported in accordance with the proposals of the Tasmanian Government.”

It is scarcely necessary that I should repeat here that the Government of Tasmania is ready to accept in their integrity the terms of the joint contribution to the Australian Highway Lights agreed upon by the Conference of 1864.

But without speculating upon the eventual acquiescence of the Continental Colonies in the Scheme adopted by the Conference, the Government of Tasmania requires that the contributions of New South Wales and Victoria towards the maintenance of the Light-houses in Bass's and Banks' Straits should be re-adjusted on the equitable basis of the terms proposed in my previous Communications.

I may state here, as I have already acquainted the Government of Victoria, that Tasmania since 1858 has contributed some £8000 more than her just proportion of the cost of the Lights in Bass's and Banks' Straits; and has in addition erected, entirely at her own cost, the Light-houses on Swan and Goose Islands, to which no other Australian Colony has ever yet contributed.

I regret to find that there now seems to be no probability that the Government of New South Wales will acquiesce in the reasonable requisitions of Tasmania, although the injustice and inequality of the existing arrangement, and the equitable character of the proposals of this Government, are not denied.

Under these circumstances the Advisers of His Excellency Colonel Gore Browne are reluctantly forced to consider what steps it may be necessary to take to compel the Continental Colonies to do justice to Tasmania, and fulfil their legitimate obligations to Australian Commerce.

I have, &c.,

(Signed) JAMES MILNE WILSON,
Pro Colonial Secretary.

*The Honorable the Colonial Secretary, Sydney,
New South Wales.*

TASMANIA.

*Colonial Secretary's Office,
Hobart Town, 5th July, 1865.*

SIR,

WITH reference to my letter under date the 23rd May last, respecting the proposed re-arrangement of the Contributions of the Governments of Victoria and New South Wales to the maintenance of the Light-houses on Tasmanian territory, I have now the honor to request that you will furnish me with an intimation of the views entertained by the Government of Victoria on the subject now under consideration.

The expectations and intentions of this Government have been already fully explained to you in previous Despatches.

I have now to request the favour of a definitive reply to my last communication.

I have the honor to be,
Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,
JAMES MILNE WILSON,
Pro Colonial Secretary.

*The Honorable the Chief Secretary,
Victoria.*