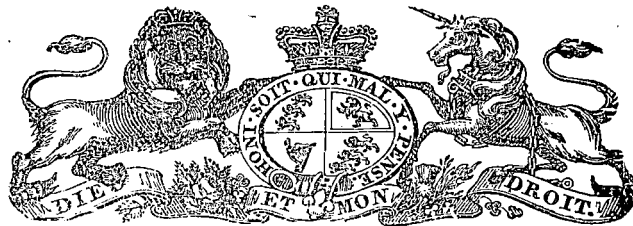


(No. 45.)



1898.

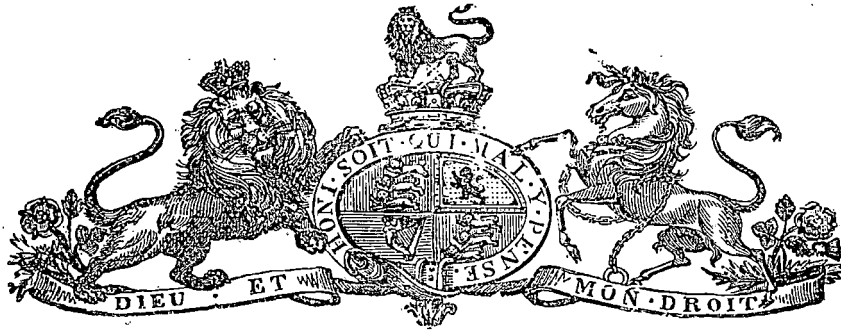
PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

CONFERENCE OF PREMIERS, MELBOURNE,
MARCH, 1898 :

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS.

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

Cost of printing—£1 9s.



CONFERENCE OF PREMIERS, HELD AT MELBOURNE, IN
MARCH, 1898.

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS.

MONDAY, MARCH 7TH, 1898.

A PRELIMINARY meeting of the Conference was held at Parliament House, Melbourne, on March 7th, 1898, at 11.15 A.M.

Present—

The Right Honorable Sir Edward Braddon, K.C.M.G., Premier of Tasmania.
The Right Honorable Sir John Forrest, K.C.M.G., Premier of Western Australia.
The Right Honorable C. C. Kingston, Q.C., Premier of South Australia.
The Right Honorable Sir. Hugh M. Nelson, K.C.M.G., Premier of Queensland.
The Right Honorable G. H. Reid, Premier of New South Wales.
The Right Honorable Sir George Turner, K.C.M.G., Premier of Victoria.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr. Reid, seconded by Mr. Kingston—That Sir George Turner, Premier of Victoria, be President of the Conference.

Mr. R. S. Rogers, Secretary to the Premier of Victoria, was appointed Secretary to the Conference.

The Conference then adjourned till 5 P.M.

The Conference met, pursuant to adjournment, at 5 P.M. The President in the chair.

Present—All the Members.

The following subjects were dealt with in the manner indicated in each case:—

1. *Mississippi Exhibition.*

Resolved—That the colonies take no part in the Exhibition.

2. *Antarctic Exploration.*

Resolved—That no joint action be taken.

3. *Coinage of Silver.*

This subject was discussed, and postponed for further consideration.

4. *Coloured Races Immigration.*

Resolved—That the colonies which have not already done so pass an Act on the lines of the Natal Act (on the understanding that the same shall be vigilantly enforced), and agree that if, after trial of that Act, any difficulties shall still arise in any one colony, then the colonies will join in such further legislation as may be necessary.

Sir Hugh Nelson (Queensland) did not join in this resolution.

5. *Thursday Island and South Australian Defences.*

This matter was discussed, and postponed for further consideration.

6. *Colonial Resources—Joint Display in London.*

Resolved— That no joint action be taken.

The Conference adjourned at 6.30 P.M., to 5 P.M. on the following day.

TUESDAY, MARCH 8TH, 1898.

The Conference met, pursuant to adjournment, at 5 P.M. The President in the chair.
Present—All the Members.

7. *Postal Reduction to United Kingdom.*

Resolved—That the Conference cannot at present advise any reduction.

8. *German and Belgian Treaties (Denunciation of), and Commercial Relations with the Mother Country.*

Resolved—That, in the opinion of this Conference, any Federal Tariff should give a preference to articles the produce or manufacture of the United Kingdom. In default of an early Federal Tariff, the Premiers will recommend to their respective Cabinets to alter the tariffs of the different colonies, so as to give a substantial preference to the United Kingdom and to such colonies.

Mr. Reid, Sir John Forrest, and Sir Edward Braddon desired to exclude narcotics and stimulants from the operation of this proposal.

Mr. Kingston considered that the resolution should be on the basis of a "reciprocal arrangement."

9. *Pacific Cable, and Cable via the Cape.*

Resolved—That if Great Britain and Canada will contribute each one-third of the cost, the four colonies of New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, and Tasmania will favourably consider the proposal for a Pacific cable, and the provision of the remaining one-third of the contribution.

Mr. Kingston and Sir John Forrest did not join in this resolution, being disposed to prefer the Cape route, stopping at Perth. It was considered that, in any case, fair consideration should be given to the position of South Australia, in view of the large expenditure by that colony in the past on cable service.

The Conference adjourned at 6:30 P.M., to 5 P.M. on the following day.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9TH, 1898.

The Conference met, pursuant to adjournment at 5 P.M. The President in the chair.
Present—All the Members.

10. *Thursday Island and South Australian Defences.*

Resolved—That the Port Darwin Defence Scheme being assented to by the colonies, South Australia contribute on population basis to the initial expenses of the Thursday Island defences, and to their maintenance from the present time; the other colonies of the Australian continent agreeing to make up the deficiency now existing in the Maintenance Fund, upon the amounts necessary being voted by the respective Parliaments.

Sir Hugh Nelson dissented, as he desired the deficiency should be at once made up.

11. *Australasian Auxiliary Squadron.*

Resolved—That all the colonies, except South Australia, agree, for the present, not to give notice of termination of existing arrangement.

Mr. Kingston, preferring another scheme which he considered more advantageous, held himself at liberty to give notice of termination at any time.

12. *Ammunition and Cordite Factory.*

After discussion, and after hearing the advice of Major-General French, Military Commandant of New South Wales, and Colonel Gunter, Military Commandant of Queensland, it was resolved—That the military commandants of New South Wales, Queensland, and Victoria interview Mr. Batley, of the Colonial Ammunition Company, Limited, and the General manager of the Australian Explosives and Chemical Company, Limited, as to terms, and that the commandants report further to the Conference to-morrow; also that the commandants give, to-morrow, a rough estimate of the expense of establishing a Government factory.

13. *Federal Quarantine.*

Resolved—That the agreement submitted by the Queensland Government be approved by the Governments of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Queensland, and Western Australia, subject to any necessary modifications.

Sir Edward Braddon undertook to communicate with the Government of New Zealand with the view of inducing that colony to join, and he stated that, in the event of the adherence of New Zealand to the scheme, Tasmania would also fall in; it being understood in such case that Auckland and Hobart should be made Federal Quarantine Stations for New Zealand and Tasmania respectively.

The Conference then adjourned at 6:35 P.M., until 5 P.M. on the following day.

THURSDAY, MARCH 10TH, 1898.

The Conference met, pursuant to adjournment, at 5 P.M. The President in the chair.
Present—All the Members.

14. *Ammunition and Cordite Factory.*

The commandants of New South Wales and Queensland were present, and reported the result of their interview with Mr. Batley, of the Colonial Ammunition Company, Limited, and with the general manager of the Australian Explosives and Chemical Company, Limited. They also gave further information on the subject generally.

Commander Collins and Mr. Batley were also heard by the Conference.

After further discussion on the subject, it was resolved—That, if the Government of Victoria does not elect within three months to establish a Government Small Arms Ammunition Factory, then the Government of New South Wales may hold itself at liberty to establish such a factory in that colony for the manufacture of ammunition from cordite.

The colonies undertook to favourably consider the question of taking supplies from the Government factory, if established, with the reservation, on the part of Victoria, that if the factory be in New South Wales the Victorian Government, having an agreement with the Colonial Ammunition Company for the next sixteen years, cannot make any arrangement for taking supplies from the New South Wales factory.

15. *Paris Exhibition.*

Resolved—That, in view of the expense of erecting a building, the small extent of ground available, and the unsuitable position of such ground, it is not advisable to establish a joint Australasian Court at the Exhibition.

16. *Australasian Colonies Evidence Act, 1898.*

Resolved—That the Bill prepared by Victoria be adopted, subject to any alterations that may subsequently be found necessary.

17. *Mr. Astley Cooper's Suggestion for a Holiday throughout the Empire, to be called "Constitution Day."*

Resolved—That the Premiers cannot at present see their way to adopt the suggestion.

18. *British Interests in the Pacific.*

The President reported that the resolution of the last Conference of Premiers on this subject had been communicated to the Imperial authorities through the proper channel, and that a reply had been received by His Excellency the Governor of Victoria to the effect that Her Majesty's Government are fully alive to the importance of British interests in the Pacific, and will gladly welcome the assistance and co-operation of the colonies in conserving and promoting them.

19. *Sale of Arms and Ammunition to Natives of New Caledonia and the New Hebrides.*

Resolved—That, as the French Government has recently seen fit to prohibit the sale of arms and ammunition to the natives of New Caledonia, urgent representatives be again made to France through the Imperial authorities to take similar action applicable to the New Hebrides, so that the disabilities under which British traders in those islands at present labour may be removed; and that if such action be not taken within a reasonable period, the British Government should remove the restrictions on British subjects, as they are unduly and improperly handicapped thereby.

20. *Silver Coinage.*

Resolved—That the Conference consents to the Governments of those colonies, which now have or may hereafter have a branch of the Royal Mint in their territory, making application to the Imperial authorities for the necessary authority for the coinage of silver at the respective branch mints, on conditions similar to those on which silver is coined in England.

The business of the Conference being concluded, it was resolved, upon the motion of Mr. Reid, seconded by Sir Edward Braddon—That the thanks of the Conference be accorded to Sir George Turner for his services as President.

A vote of thanks was also accorded to Mr. Rogers for his services as Secretary.

The President then (at 6.35 P.M.) declared the Conference closed.

GEORGE TURNER, *President.*

ROBERT S. ROGERS, *Secretary.*