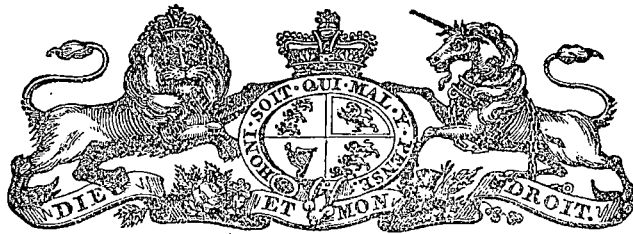


(No. 8.)



1877.

SESSION III.

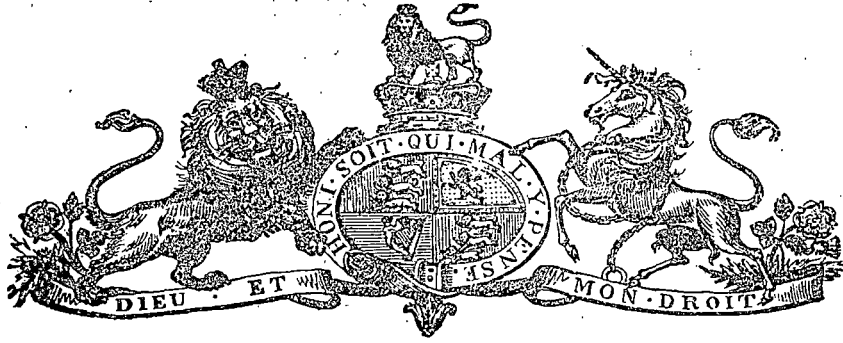
T A S M A N I A.

H O U S E O F A S S E M B L Y.

DEFENCES OF THE COLONY:

CORRESPONDENCE.

Laid upon the Table by the Colonial Secretary, and ordered by the House to be printed, July 13, 1877.



CORRESPONDENCE CONNECTED WITH DEFENCES OF THE COLONY.

Colonial Secretary's Office, 8th May, 1877.

MEMO.

THE Colonial Secretary has the honor to request that His Excellency will be pleased to ascertain from Sir Hercules Robinson when it would be possible for Sir William Jervois to visit this Colony with the view of reporting upon the best practicable means of defence.

The very limited means which the Government are justified in anticipating Parliament will be prepared to place at the disposal of the Executive for the purposes of defence renders it of paramount importance that they should be in possession of the best advice to guide them in the expenditure of the amount that may be available for this purpose; and, under these circumstances, an early intimation of the date when Sir William Jervois might be expected would be highly appreciated by His Excellency's Advisers.

THOS. REIBEY.

His Excellency the Governor.

*Colonial Secretary's Office, Sydney, New South Wales,
10th May, 1877.*

SIR,

It seems probable that the inquiry now being made as to the Defences of the Australian Colonies will render it desirable that the services of an Engineer Officer of experience and ability should be obtained for some years to carry out as efficiently and economically as possible the scheme which may be recommended by Sir William Jervois and adopted by the Colonial Governments.

2. If your Government, on full consideration of the subject, should take this view, I venture to suggest that the work in contemplation is one in which the first step in real federal action might very fittingly be taken. If a time arrive exposing these Colonies to the aggressions of any Power at war with Great Britain, a weak point in the defence of any one of them would be a weak point in the security of the whole. It appears to be obvious, therefore, that the projection of Works of Defence and the supervision of their execution will be best done if done by the several Colonies in concert,—leaving the cost of works in each case, which may vary considerably, to be borne as a general rule by the Colony requiring them. In this case, if the Colonies united, they might in all probability secure the services of an officer of higher standing and qualifications than any Colony would obtain singly.

3. The task of supervising generally the construction of the defensive works in the four continental Colonies, and possibly in Tasmania, would perhaps not be beyond the capability of one officer, who might be engaged for five years,—leaving any further engagement a matter for consideration at the termination of that period. If an assistant were found to be necessary, his engagement would, of course, come under the same terms.

4. The salary and allowances might be shared amongst the several Governments in proportion to the time occupied on duty in each Colony.

I have, &c.

(Signed) HENRY PARKES.

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

Tasmania,
Colonial Secretary's Office, 21st May, 1877.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th instant, suggesting that it may probably be deemed advisable to secure the services of an Engineer Officer of experience and ability to carry out as efficiently and economically as possible the scheme which may be recommended by Sir William Jervois for the general defences of the Australian Colonies.

You justly point out that a weak point in the defence of any one of the Colonies would be a weak point in the security of the whole, and that therefore the projection of Works of Defence and the supervision of their execution will be best done if done by the several Colonies in concert.

In these views this Government fully concur, and would be prepared to recommend to Parliament that Tasmania should join in the concerted action of the continental Colonies in the endeavour to secure the services of an Officer of high standing to plan and supervise all approved Defence Works; but the position you assume, that a weak point in the defence of any one of the Australian Colonies directly affects the security of the whole, appears to me as hardly compatible with the suggestion that "the cost of the works in each case, which may vary considerably, should be borne as a general rule by the Colony requiring them."

To make federal action a reality as regards Colonial Defence, I would submit that a complete and well-defined scheme embracing the requisite works for each Colony having been devised and accepted by the several Governments interested, the cost of their construction and armament should be paid from a common fund derived from the contributions of each Colony according to population.

At the same time each Government should be bound to maintain in a state of efficiency a Force sufficient to man whatever defensive works may have been constructed, or retained, as part of the entire scheme.

By adopting this plan the Colonies would, for the purpose of defence, so far as the construction and armament of Batteries, Ships, &c., is concerned, act as one Dominion, each portion recognising the danger to itself which must result from the successes of an enemy's squadron when attacking another.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary,
New South Wales.

I have, &c.
(Signed) THOS. REIBEY.

Colonial Secretary's Office, Sydney, New South Wales, 28th June, 1877.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 21st ultimo, assenting to arrangement of an Engineer Officer to carry out Works of Defence.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary of Tasmania,
Hobart Town.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HENRY HALLORAN,
for the Colonial Secretary.

New South Wales,
Government House, Sydney, 22nd May, 1877.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge the receipt of Your Excellency's letter of the 10th instant, forwarding a copy of a Memorandum from your Ministers requesting you to apply for the services of Sir William Jervois and Colonel Scratchley, to advise upon the defences of Tasmania.

I telegraphed to you yesterday that Sir William Jervois and Colonel Scratchley would be happy to accede to your request, and would fix the time of their visit on arriving in Melbourne at the beginning of next month.

With reference to your enquiry as to the terms upon which Sir William Jervois and Colonel Scratchley's assistance can be rendered, I have to inform you that the scale of remuneration is still under the consideration of Her Majesty's Government; but my Ministers are satisfied that Tasmania should contribute to the total cost of the mission either in proportion to population, or in any other way that your Government may consider fair.

His Excellency F. A. WELD.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HERCULES ROBINSON.

For the information of Ministers.

26th May, 1877.

(Signed) FRED. A. WELD.

PERUSED and returned with thanks.

30th May, 1877.

(Signed) THOS. REIBEY.