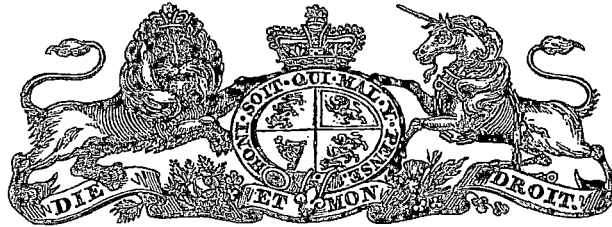


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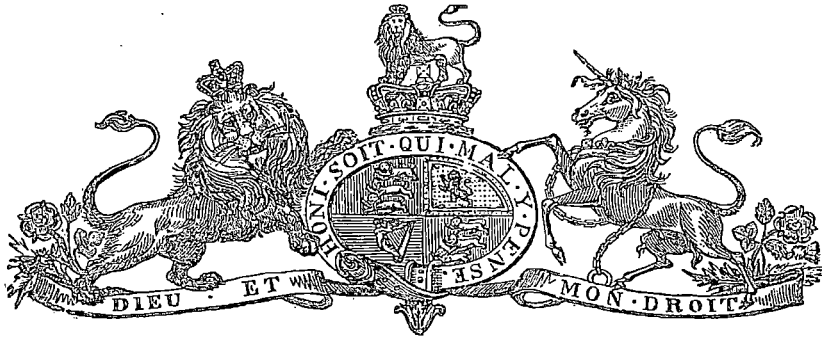
1856.

T A S M A N I A.

L E T T E R

FROM MR. GREGSON TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR
ON THE FORMATION OF A MINISTRY.

Ordered by the Legislative Council to be printed, 27 March, 1857.



37, Davey-street, Hobart Town, 26th February, 1857.

SIR,

HAVING been honored with Your Excellency's commands to undertake the formation of a Ministry, in consequence of the resignation of your late responsible Advisers, I have now the honor to submit to Your Excellency the names of those Members of the Legislature to whom, under my own direction and supervision, I propose to confide, with Your Excellency's sanction, the administration of the public affairs of the Colony.

I feel it, however, due to myself, and to those gentlemen whose co-operation I have engaged at this trying juncture, to recapitulate briefly the circumstances which have rendered it expedient for Your Excellency to apply to myself, to explain the considerations which have actuated me in my efforts to construct a Government out of the existing Legislature, which should command the support of Parliament and the confidence of the Country; and to place on record the reasons which have weighed with me in the selection of the individuals whom I propose to constitute my colleagues in Your Excellency's Government.

The vote of the 13th instant, which was carried on my motion against Mr. Champ's Ministry, contemplated nothing more than an enunciation of an abstract principle, to which the assent of the House was asked, at a conjuncture of great financial embarrassment, as a statement of an opinion entertained by many members, which it was desirable should be specifically pronounced to the Constituencies by a deliberate vote of the Assembly, as a sort of corollary to the Estimates and Expenditure already authorised for the year 1857. There was no indication in any quarter of an intention to proceed further at present. Several of the ordinary supporters of Government voted in favour of the Resolution.

Subsequently, Mr. Champ endeavoured to cause "so much of the vote of the 13th as referred to the Governor's Salary" to be rescinded, as involving a breach of public faith. The Assembly refused to make this invidious distinction between the Governor and his responsible Advisers; and, after several amendments had been rejected, Mr. Champ's motion was negatived by a majority of *one*. Mr. Champ, on the following day, announced his resignation, on the ground that the Assembly had sanctioned by its vote a violation of the public faith. Your Excellency then did me the honor to seek my advice, and entrusted me with the formation of a new Ministry. At the interview I had with Your Excellency on Friday last, the name, amongst others, of a gentleman connected with the northern side of the Island was suggested by Your Excellency as that of a desirable and likely man to fill creditably and usefully the post of Colonial Treasurer. I caused a communication with that object to be made to that gentleman, but without success. I was anxious to secure the assistance of the gentleman in question as that of a person apparently enjoying Your Excellency's confidence, as possessing a certain amount of weight with both sides of the House, some official experience, and considerable acquaintance with the country: but I must own to Your Excellency that his admission to a Cabinet of which I was to be Premier would have been a concession on my part to the necessity for conciliating others, and to the exigencies of the crisis, which I might have found it difficult to justify to several of my own political friends, as his political principles and recorded votes have been generally in opposition to my own.

Further urged by the necessity for combining in my Cabinet a set of men who, if possible, should conciliate the support and confidence of a majority of the Members of the Assembly, I endeavoured to procure the assistance as Attorney-General of a gentleman who, though lately attached by political ties to Mr. Champ's Ministry, is comparatively new to the politics of the Colony, yet enjoys a fair share of the respect of the Assembly, and is not without professional experience. This gentleman not unnaturally felt scruples at acceding to the course suggested; and he, too, declined the office proposed to him. I had now, in honest and conscientious deference to what I believed to be Your Excellency's sole object in seeking my assistance—namely, the formation of a firm and popular Ministry—found myself thus far unsuccessful in securing the co-operation of Members whose adhesion would have given an air of conciliation, if not imparted the character

of a coalition to my Government. It now became necessary to fall back on the valued services of my close and intimate political associates, who had been previously willing to lend a Ministry formed under my leadership their independent support (as effectually as they had long sided with me in opposition) without office or emolument. These gentlemen were my personal as well as my political friends—one of them my own son. I trust your Excellency will do me the justice to recognise the motives which weighed with me in seeking their co-operation only when my attempts at other combinations had proved unsuccessful. Your Excellency will also, perhaps, allow me to remind you that the principal legal Member of the Executive Council must be a Barrister and a Member of the Legislature, and that the present Assembly only contains three such Members; of whom two were Mr. Champ's colleagues—the third my own son, the Member for Norfolk Plains. I must also beg Your Excellency to remember that this last gentleman already occupies a non-political appointment as Chairman of Quarter Sessions, which he of course loses by the acceptance of office as a responsible Minister.

I have now the honor to submit to Your Excellency the names of a new Ministry as follows. I propose to constitute myself Colonial Secretary, without salary, but with all the responsibilities of an office of profit or emolument. Your Excellency is probably aware that I stand pledged as a public man never to accept public money as a servant of the Crown; but I trust I know my duty to my Sovereign and to my Country too well to shrink from the responsibilities of office, when public necessity demands my aid, any more than I have ever shrunk from taking my place, and that a prominent one, in the Legislature in which my fellow Colonists have deemed me worthy of a seat for upwards of 15 years. I propose further to distribute the Departments as follows:—

Colonial Secretary	Mr. Gregson.
Colonial Treasurer	Mr. Meredith.
Attorney-General	Mr. J. C. Gregson.
Members of the Executive Council without Office.	{ The Hon. Mr. Wedge. The Hon. Mr. Whyte. Mr. Miller.

With these gentlemen I shall be able to conduct the affairs of the Colony under a sense of responsibility to Parliament, with the strong assistance of a common political creed. Of their capacity and integrity I need scarcely assure Your Excellency I entertain a very high opinion.

With these colleagues I am now prepared to undertake the responsibilities of office,—carrying with me, as I have strong grounds for believing, the support of Parliament and the general confidence of the Colonists.

I trust that the importance of the occasion, and the circumstances I have glanced at in this Letter, will assure Your Excellency that no time has been lost in completing these arrangements as speedily as was consistent with due deliberation, and a proper regard for the requirements of the public service.

It only remains for me to say, that I have used every exertion to execute to the best of my ability, and, as I believe, for the advantage of the country, the honourable though onerous commission confided to me by Your Excellency.

Awaiting Your Excellency's reply to this communication,

I have the honor to be, Sir,
Your Excellency's most obedient and humble Servant,

THOMAS GEORGE GREGSON.

Sir H. E. F. YOUNG, *Knt.*
Governor-in-Chief of Tasmania.