

(No. 31.)



1857.

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T A S M A N I A.

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C O R R E S P O N D E N C E

BETWEEN THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE  
UPON THE TRIGONOMETRICAL SURVEY AND THE COLO-  
NIAL TREASURER.

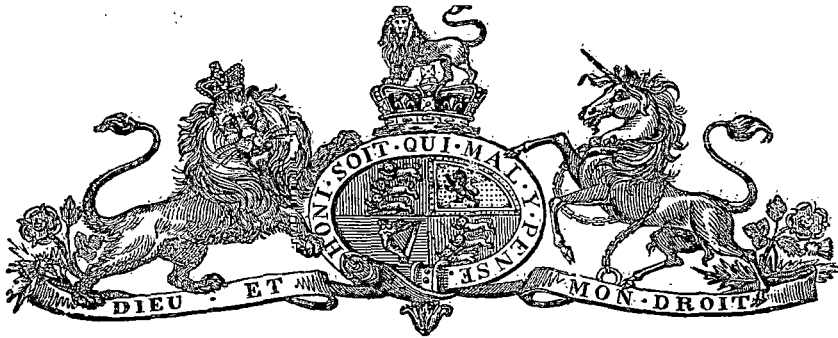
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Laid upon the Table by Mr. Wedge, and ordered by the Council to be printed,  
19 February, 1858.

*Resolved*—That the Correspondence between the Chairman of the Committee and the Colonial Treasurer be brought under the notice of this Council.

*Resolved*—That this Committee consider that Rule 66 of the Standing Rules of this Council has been violated; and that if such a course is to be adopted by the Government with reference to the proceedings of Select Committees, such Committees will be prevented from carrying out the object submitted to their enquiry.

*Select Committee Room, 19 February, 1858.*



*Committee Room, Legislative Council, 16 December, 1857.*

SIR,

I HAVE the honor, in compliance with the wish of the Select Committee appointed by the Legislative Council to enquire into the state of the Trigonometrical Survey, to transmit to you the accompanying Resolution adopted at a recent Meeting of the Committee in question; and I am further to request that you will have the goodness to issue the necessary instructions, in order that the object therein contemplated may be carried into effect.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

J. H. WEDGE, *Chairman of the Committee.*

*The Hon. the Colonial Secretary.*

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RESOLUTION.

“THE Select Committee appointed to enquire into and report upon the state of the Trigonometrical Survey, in carefully examining the Evidence that has been taken, find that some of it is conflicting as to the accuracy of the Triangulation, and consequently the Committee feel that there is some degree of doubt respecting it. The Committee would therefore suggest that it would be desirable that the Surveyor-General, to be accompanied by Colonel Hamilton, Mr. Calder, and the Chairman of the Committee, should be directed, during the Christmas Recess, to test the accuracy of the Triangulation by intersections in three or four localities, where three or more Stations can be seen,—say in the South, the North, and Central parts of the Island.”

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*Colonial Treasury, 29th December, 1857.*

SIR,

I HAVE the honor, in reference to your communication of the 16th instant, transmitting a Resolution adopted by the Committee of the Legislative Council to enquire into the state of the Trigonometrical Survey, to acquaint you that Colonel Hamilton declines to undertake the duty which the Committee propose to assign to him.

But irrespective of that impediment to a compliance with the wishes of the Committee, I beg through you to bring under its notice that the expenditure attendant upon testing the Triangulation, as proposed, would be considerable; and the Government having ascertained this to be the case, would not have considered itself justified in incurring such expense unless sanctioned by a vote of the Legislature. I have also further to submit to the Committee, in reference to the nomination of Mr. Calder in conjunction with yourself and others in the proposed investigation, that the Government would not, in any case, sanction the employment of a Public Officer in testing the work of his Official Superior.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your very obedient Servant,

FRED. M. INNES.

J. H. WEDGE, *Esq.*, M.L.C.,  
*Leighlands, Perth.*

*Leighland, 4th January, 1858.*

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 29th ultimo, in reply to the request made by the Select Committee of the Legislative Council that a Board, to consist of Mr. Sprent, Colonel Hamilton, Mr. Calder, and myself, might be appointed to test the accuracy of the Trigonometrical Survey, wherein it is stated for the information of the Committee, "that Colonel Hamilton declines to undertake the duty which the Committee proposed to assign to him;" and that, "irrespective of that impediment to a compliance with the wishes of the Committee," the Government having ascertained "that the expenditure attendant upon testing the Triangulation, as proposed, would be considerable, would not have considered itself justified in incurring such expense unless sanctioned by a vote of the Legislature;" and that "in reference to the nomination of Mr. Calder, in conjunction with myself and others, in the proposed investigation, the Government would not in any case sanction the employment of a Public Officer in testing the work of his Official Superior."

I may be allowed to remark, I trust, without taking too much upon myself, that in consequence of the conflicting evidence it was deemed desirable, not only that the Government might have a Report based on sufficient and reliable evidence, but also that justice might be done to all parties concerned; and therefore it was that the simple, inexpensive, and expeditious mode of testing the accuracy of the Triangulation was suggested by the Select Committee.

Under existing doubts, arising from the difficulties experienced in accurately connecting the Chain with the Trigonometrical Survey, as established by evidence, it is to be regretted that a gentleman so impartial and competent as Colonel Hamilton should decline to be one of the Board, the duties of which would have caused so little trouble and expense to remove all uncertainty in reference to the correctness of the Triangulation.

In alluding to the opinion entertained by the Government, "that the expenditure attendant upon testing the Triangulation, as proposed, would be considerable," I venture to state my belief that it must have been considerably over-estimated; otherwise I cannot imagine that such a consideration would be allowed to operate as an obstacle to the carrying into effect the proposed mode of removing all doubt relative to a work of so much importance. I would respectfully suggest that it is all-important that, if there is that degree of accuracy which has been claimed, it will do the greatest credit to Mr. Sprent, and the sooner it is established beyond a doubt the better. On the other hand, if it be otherwise, it must be borne in mind that it neither can nor will, for any length of time, "be hid under a bushel." If the proposed operation would cost even £200, it would be money well spent in removing all uncertainty; but at the same time I do not see how it could cost more than £50.

Referring to the objections raised to the nomination of Mr. Calder to be one of the Board, the Government must, I conceive, have misapprehended the object the Select Committee had in view. That gentleman, in his evidence, expressed doubts as to the practicability of taking observations with that degree of accuracy, to and from objects of the nature of many of those which have been erected as stations for the Trigonometrical survey of the Island, necessary for laying down a correct Triangulation of the country. The Select Committee did not contemplate that Mr. Calder should alone test the work of his "Official Superior," nor do anything more than render his assistance to the Board. It would have been his duty, as it would have been that of every other individual engaged in the service, to have taken a memorandum of the bearings from the spot to be intersected to the several stations seen from it, and to see that they were correctly laid down on the Map of Triangulations in the Survey Office. This work correctly done would speak for itself, and could not be perverted or falsified either by Mr. Calder or any one else. Had the Select Committee suggested that Mr. Calder should alone be appointed to perform the work contemplated, the objection might have been a valid one; but as such was not the case, there could be no greater objection to his appointment than to that of Mr. Sprent's. But, be that as it may, as Colonel Hamilton has declined to act, and the Government has declared that it "would not in any case sanction the employment of Mr. Calder" on the proposed work, I have no doubt it would meet the views of the Select Committee if the Government would instruct Mr. Sprent to make the proposed intersections; and, as the Select Committee expressed a wish that I should be one of the Board, I will attend that gentleman at any time ten days prior to the meeting of the Parliament on the 19th instant. If this suggestion should be acceded to, I will beg

the favour of an early communication, fixing the time of my meeting Mr. Sprent, either at this place or in the neighbourhood, so that we may do what is necessary on my way to attend Council. Believing as I do that it is of the utmost importance that the suggestion of the Committee should be carried out, not only as far as the interests of the Colony are concerned, but in justice to all concerned, I therefore earnestly press it upon the consideration of the Government.

I have the honor to be, &c.,

JOHN H. WEDGE.

FRED. M. INNES, *Esq.*, M.H.A.,  
*Colonial Treasurer.*

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*Colonial Treasury, 5th January, 1858.*

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge your letter of yesterday's date, and to obviate inconvenience to you I reply to it at once, and without reference to the Ministry (which is now impracticable), by saying that so short a period has to elapse before Parliament re-assembles, when I hope to meet you here, that I think the consideration of your suggestion had better be postponed till then.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your very obedient Servant,

FRED. M. INNES.

J. H. WEDGE, *Esq.*, *Leighlands.*