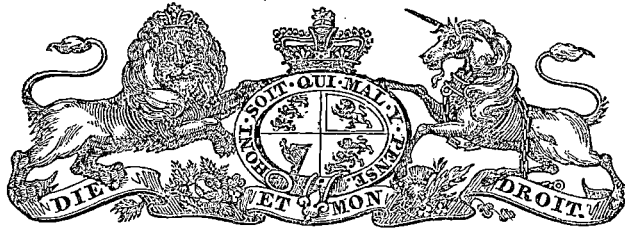


(No. 91.)



1864.

T A S M A N I A.

LETTER

FROM CHIEF SECRETARY, VICTORIA, ON TRANSPORTATION.

Laid on the Table by the Colonial Treasurer, and ordered by the House to be printed, 31 August, 1864.



*Victoria, Chief Secretary's Office,
Melbourne, 18th August, 1864.*

SIR,

I FEEL that I need offer no apology for calling your attention to a subject of such vital importance as the continuance of Transportation from Great Britain to Western Australia.

It will doubtless be within your knowledge that, in continuance of the efforts previously made by this Colony to obtain from Her Majesty's Government the cessation of Transportation to any part of Australia, in fulfilment of the promise made by His Grace the Duke of Newcastle, and in justice to Her Majesty's subjects in this part of the Empire, Resolutions passed by both Houses of Legislature were transmitted to the Secretary of State for the Colonies in March last.

In reply to those Resolutions His Excellency Sir Charles Darling has received a Despatch, which, from its terms, coupled with the passing of the Penal Servitude Bill by the English Parliament forbids the hope of our receiving that consideration which we have a right to expect.

It has become painfully apparent to the Government of Victoria that something more than mere remonstrance is needed, and that the time has arrived which makes it imperatively necessary for the Colonies of New South Wales, Queensland, South Anstralia, New Zealand, Tasmania, and Victoria, whose interests are alike involved, to take prompt and efficient measures for their common protection, and such as will show Her Majesty's Advisers that the Inhabitants of these Colonies are determined by every means in their power to free themselves from the injury inflicted upon them.

It is unnecessary for me to use any argument in favour of the desirability of effecting the absolute termination of Transportation to Western Australia at a very early date, and that whatever action be determined upon should be with that end in view; nor need I point out how utterly inconsistent is the policy now adopted by Her Majesty's Government with the policy which governed her Advisers when transportation to Van Diemen's Land was abolished, because it was objectionable to the adjacent Colonies.

In inviting the co-operation of the Government of Tasmania in this matter, which so deeply concerns the Australian Colonies generally, I do myself the honor to inform you that, at the present moment, it appears to this Government that the object to be gained will be best secured by joint Legislative action, prohibitive of all intercourse whatever with Western Australia; by which means the stigma of being the only Convict Colony in Australia would be visibly fastened upon her. To do this effectually, it will of course be essential that the Mail Steamers should no longer be allowed to call at any port within the limits of that Colony. It may become necessary to consider the propriety of again making Kangaroo Island the place of call; but, whatever may be the ultimate determination on that point, this Government is so fully impressed with the necessity of immediate action in the matter, that the outgoing Mail will convey to the Secretary of State a formal notice from this Government that we insist upon compliance with such a condition by the Peninsular and Oriental Company; and that, in the event of refusal, Victoria will withdraw not only her proportion of the present subsidy, but also her offer to join in contributing to a fortnightly service, in reference to which I have addressed you in a previous Communication.

Should the proposition of the Government of Victoria meet with the concurrence of the Colonies concerned, I would suggest that the details of a measure to be submitted to their respective Legislatures would be more easily arrived at by a meeting of Representatives from each Government; and with that view the Government of Victoria will be prepared to send their Representative to any place, and at any time, that may be thought desirable.

In conclusion, I would observe that, as it is important that no time should be lost in arriving at a decision as to the course to be pursued, I hope to be favoured with the views of the Government of Tasmania at as early a date as possible.

I have, &c.,
(Signed) JAMES M'CULLOCH.

The Honorable the Colonial Secretary, Tasmania.