

(No. 89.)



1883.

---

T A S M A N I A.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

---

**INTERCOLONIAL CUSTOMS DUTIES :**

**CORRESPONDENCE.**

---

Laid upon the Table by Mr. Moore, and ordered by the Council to be printed,  
September 18, 1883.



## CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN TASMANIA AND VICTORIA AS TO INTERCOLONIAL CUSTOMS DUTIES.

---

*Premier's Office, Hobart, 30th June, 1883.*

MY DEAR SIR,

HAVING read from time to time, with great interest, your public utterances on Australian Federation, and more especially the recent address delivered by you at the celebration of the completion of the Railway between Melbourne and Sydney, it occurs to me that the time is opportune for doing some small practical work in the way of Intercolonial Union, by entering into a reciprocal agreement between Victoria and Tasmania for the interchange, free of Customs Duties, of all articles the growth, produce, or manufacture of our respective Colonies.

I am sure you will recognise the fact, so patent to every Tasmanian, that your Colony affords the natural market for such commodities as Victoria is in the habit of consuming, which our colder climate can profitably and successfully produce. Thus, our hops, fruit, jam, timber, and, perhaps, ale, might, with advantage to both Colonies, be used much more largely in Victoria than at present. The high duties now imposed by Victoria on some of these articles have driven our produce from your shores to the more liberal but more distant Colonies of New South Wales, Queensland, New Zealand, and South Australia. While, on the other hand, our Tariff, though not distinctively a protective one, is yet so high as respects your wines, your sheep and cattle, and, to some extent, your manufactures, as to restrict and limit the importations which ought to take place from our nearest neighbour.

So long as Victoria maintained an apparently easy commercial supremacy over New South Wales, and while Tasmania appeared to be in a depressed, if not a somnolent condition, all efforts to bring about Free Trade between our two Colonies have proved abortive. But now that Victoria seems awakening to the fact that her restrictions on trade and commerce are bearing their natural fruit, while, so far as we are concerned, the great mineral discoveries of the last few years have added immensely to the importance of this Colony as a market for your productions, I think that we might make a successful effort to bind more closely the intimate commercial relations which should subsist between our Colonies.

Happily, the vexed question of Protection or Free Trade need not be a barrier to our union. The Victorian manufacturer will extend his market a little more; and as at the present time a good deal of Victorian capital is being invested in Tasmania, and as your Government have in Postal and Telegraph arrangements shown a statesmanlike desire to act liberally and wisely for our common good, I hope that your great personal influence and intimate knowledge of commercial affairs will induce you to take the lead in forming a union between Victoria and Tasmania which shall make them for Customs purposes as a commercial unit.

Yours faithfully,

W. R. GIBLIN.

*The Honorable JAMES SERVICE, Premier.*

---

No. 188.

*Premier's Office, Melbourne, 16th July, 1883.*

MY DEAR SIR,

PERMIT me to express the pleasure with which I have received and read your interesting letter of the 30th June, on the subject of a re-adjustment of Customs Duties as between our two Colonies.

I am fully alive to the great importance of the subject; but our position in Victoria is, that we have a Royal Commission on the Tariff now sitting: pending its Report, action in the direction indicated by you would be premature.

*sic.* The Commission has been in Session                    months, and its Report is now expected to be issued in a few weeks.

I hope that its Report, or such modification of it as Parliament may approve, will form a basis for negotiations not only with Tasmania but with other Colonies. Should this hope be realised, I will communicate again with you at the earliest date possible.

I am, &amp;c.

JAMES SERVICE.

*The Honorable the Premier, Hobart.**Premier's Office, Hobart, 23rd July, 1883.*

MY DEAR SIR,

I HAVE to thank you for your cordial letter of the 16th instant as to the adjustment of Customs Duties between our two Colonies, and to express my earnest hope that you may, on receipt of the Report of the Tariff Commissioners, see your way to enter into a Reciprocity Agreement with Tasmania on the basis of the powers conferred upon our Colonies by the last Imperial Act.

I am, &amp;c.

W. R. GIBLIN.

*The Honorable the Premier, Victoria.*