

(No. 103.)



1892.

PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

THE AGENT-GENERAL AS DIRECTOR OF CERTAIN
COMPANIES :

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

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by His Excellency's Command.



THE AGENT-GENERAL AS DIRECTOR OF CERTAIN
COMPANIES.

BRITISH AUSTRALIAN MINING TRUST INVESTMENT COMPANY.

TELEGRAM.

Hobart, 20th August, 1889.

CABLEGRAM thirteenth mentions Tasmanian Agent-General joined Directorate British Australian Mining Trust Investment Co. As this position is likely to be challenged, can you inform this Government whether the nature of this venture would warrant your own Agent-General in joining?

P. O. FYSH.

The Hon. the Premier, Adelaide, South Australia.

TELEGRAM.

The Premier to the Agent-General.

Hobart, 23rd August, 1889.

(Translation).

Do not commit yourself Directorship of Investment Company.

TELEGRAM.

Adelaide, 23rd August, 1889.

YOURS of the 20th instant. No opinion to offer concerning venture, but we should disapprove of our Agent-General accepting any such position.

JOHN A. COCKBURN, *Premier.*

The Premier.

TELEGRAM.

Melbourne, 27th August, 1889.

FOLLOWING telegram received from our Secretary; send reply to me and I will forward free of charge:—"Braddon, London, to Premier, Tasmania:—Promised Miss Cornwell act Director Mining Trust Company, which should draw capital to Tasmanian mines and extend influence; withdrawal will embarrass her; many prominent colonists engaged; please cable."

W. WARREN.

Hon. Premier.

TELEGRAM.

Hobart, 28th August, 1889.

WILL you kindly reply to Braddon as follows:—"Withdraw from Cornwell venture."

PREMIER.

W. WARREN, *Esq., Low Head.*

Premier's Office, Hobart, 28th August, 1889.

No. 491.

SIR,

It was with some surprise that I observed in a *Mercury* cablegram of the 13th instant, that your name was included on the Directorate of the British Australian Mining Trust Investment Company, a venture initiated by Miss Cornwell.

I can only surmise that you have overlooked that paragraph of your Instructions which explicitly states that "you are not to lend the weight of your position to any Colonial venture or speculation by identifying yourself in any way with its promoters."

For many reasons it is exceedingly undesirable that the representative of the Colony in England should be publicly associated with any undertaking to which speculators may be attracted. There should be no cause whatever for investors to conclude that the Government through their Agent-General lend any countenance to the operations of a Company over whose management and affairs they can exercise no supervision, for the object of obtaining the names of prominent public men on the directorate is clearly that they should be decoys for applicants for shares.

My telegram to you of to-day will have shown that the Ministry are not prepared to make any exception to the course laid down for your guidance in this direction. If embarrassment has been caused to Miss Cornwell it has not arisen from the action of the Government, and an explanation of the circumstances under which you are called upon to resign the position of Director should be regarded as satisfactory by the Company.

I may add that attention has been called in Parliament to this infringement of your Instructions, and an expression of strong condemnation of your action can only be avoided by compliance with the wishes of the Government.

I have, &c.,

P. O. FYSH.

E. BRADDON, *Esquire, Agent-General for Tasmania,*
London.

*Office of the Agent-General for Tasmania, 3, Westminster Chambers,
Victoria-street, London, S.W., 10th October, 1889.*

No. 622.

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge your Despatch, No. 491, of the 28th August.

It was not without some hesitation and anxious consideration of my Instructions that I gave a provisional promise to act upon the Board of Miss Cornwell's Company. But, after arguing the matter out fully, I came to the conclusion that the object of this Company being the promotion of mining generally, the purpose being that the Company should be of the nature of an agency to finance, and otherwise act for any mining properties whether in Australasia or elsewhere, my Instructions did not preclude my accepting a position which would have extended my influence in financial circles, and afforded me some opportunity of attracting capital to Tasmanian mines.

I did not attach any great weight to the fact that the Company were to take over some mining properties of Miss Cornwell's, because the bulk of the purchase money was to be paid in shares. I will not, however, justify my proposed action at further length, inasmuch as that justification has been rendered to some extent supererogatory by my withdrawal from the position I had occupied, and because, in fact, I never became a Director.

I observe in the *Mercury* that something was said in the Legislative Council about my not having reported my acceptance of this directorship. As to this I would observe that I could not have reported that which was not finally settled. Up to the date of arrival of your cablegram the directorate of this Company had *not* been finally settled, and, as far as I know, is not settled now. A few days before that cablegram reached me I had informed Miss Cornwell that in certain contingencies I should not be able to act as a Director in her Company. *And it is quite within the bounds of possibility* that even had your cablegram not come I might have found myself constrained to ask that my name might be struck out of the proposed directorate.

I have, &c.

E. BRADDON, *Agent-General.*

The Hon. the Premier, &c., Hobart, Tasmania.

P.S.—I ought to have mentioned, as one of the facts that influenced me, that the local board of Miss Cornwell's Company in the several Australasian Colonies included many prominent and excellent names—some of past or present Ministers of the Crown.

HOBART TRAMWAY COMPANY.

TELEGRAM.

London, 25th September, 1889.

AGENT-GENERAL of Tasmania has accepted the Directorship Tramway. Beneficial to Company. Wire consent.

WALPOLE.

The Premier, Hobart.

TELEGRAM.

The Premier to the Agent-General.

Hobart, 27th September, 1889.

(Translation.)

TRAMWAYS: Referring to telegram, Walpole, Government refuse to sanction Directorship.

TELEGRAM.

The Premier to the Agent-General.

Hobart, 2nd October, 1891.

(Translation.)

If you are satisfied with the prospectus of Company, of which Ministers know nothing, you can accept the position of Chairman.

*Office of the Agent-General for Tasmania, Westminster Chambers,
5, Victoria-street, London, S.W., 6th April, 1892.*

No. 116.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to report for the information of your Government that I have accepted, in accordance with your cablegram of the 2nd Oct. 1891, the position of Chairman of the Hobart Tramway Company Board.

I have, &c.

E. BRADDON, *Agent-General.*

The Hon. the Premier, &c., Hobart, Tasmania.

GREAT NORTHERN RAILWAY COMPANY.

The Premier to the Agent-General.

Hobart, 6th June, 1892.

(Translation.)

IN the event of invited to Board of Directors Waratah-Zeehan Railway accept appointment if you are satisfied that prospectus justified by circumstances. Careful to avoid compromising Government. Let me have earliest possible information successful flotation. Adverse comments English press on the matter of association of any Agent-General with unsound financial projects.