

3. I transmit herewith a copy of a memorandum which I have received from my Ministers on the subject, stating that the Government of this colony is unable to offer any opinion thereon until Parliament has been consulted.

4. I forward also copies of the letters which were received by my Government from the Governments of Victoria, Queensland, and Tasmania, in answer to their communications.

I have, &c.,

WM. F. DRUMMOND JERVOIS.

The Right Hon. Colonel Stanley, M.P.

Enclosure 1.

MEMORANDUM with reference to Despatch No. 33, dated 12th June, 1885, from the SECRETARY OF STATE for the COLONIES, on the Defence of King George's Sound.

In coming to a conclusion on this important matter, it should be observed :—

1. That the only routes for ships approaching the Australian Colonies, including New Zealand, from the westward are by the Suez Canal and the Cape of Good Hope. Those taking the former route may pass either by the north or the south of the Australian Continent, though, as a matter of fact, the majority go by the south ; but those coming by the Cape, which include the direct steamers destined for New Zealand, must pass by the south, and go comparatively near to the fine harbour and coaling-station of King George's Sound.

2. If, therefore, in time of war, this harbour were held by an enemy, he might, acting therefrom, cut off our merchant steamers and ships ; whereas if it were secured to us it would become a base of operations whence British men-of-war could operate for the defence of our commerce.

3. All the Australasian Colonies, including New Zealand, are therefore interested in King George's Sound being efficiently defended, on the same principle as they are interested in the defence of Torres Straits (for which object they contribute to the expenses for New Guinea), and in like manner as, hereafter, when the Panama Canal is opened, they will be jointly interested in the defence of a port in the Pacific between New Zealand and America.

4. Queensland may naturally refuse to pay the whole cost of the protection of Torres Straits ; it would be unjust to expect that New Zealand should bear the entire burden of the establishment and maintenance of a fortified harbour on some island in the Pacific ; and it is out of the question that Western Australia, with a population of thirty-two thousand, should be called upon to fortify and garrison a harbour which, although situated within its own boundary, is of Australasian importance. The expense of such defences should be shared by the whole group of colonies who benefit by them.

5. As regards the annual amount which New Zealand would in this case have to contribute, no definite estimate can be given until the precise constitution of the proposed military force is determined. Supposing, however, that a certain number of artillerymen and torpedo men, with officers, were to be permanently stationed on the spot, and that the infantry were only sent to King George's Sound on an emergency occurring, probably the annual cost to New Zealand would be from £2,500 to £3,000 a year. This would be in addition to the share for the expense of works, which, according to the plan suggested by the Inspector-General of Fortifications, would only be about £1,500—i.e., one-sixth of £6,000 and (say) £3,000 for barracks.

6. The adoption of Sir P. Scratchley's plan might be left for future consideration.

7. It will be observed that the Imperial Government undertake to provide the armaments and torpedo stores for the plan recommended by the Inspector-General of Fortifications.

8. I would suggest that the Government of New Zealand should, in the first place, put themselves in communication with the several Governments of Australia, with a view of ascertaining the course which each proposes to adopt.

WM. F. DRUMMOND JERVOIS.

Government House, Wellington, 12th August, 1885.

Enclosure 2.

MEMORANDUM for His EXCELLENCY.

THE Premier has the honour to inform His Excellency that the Government has given the most careful consideration to the question of the defence of King George's Sound, referred to in Despatch No. 33, of the 12th June last, and His Excellency's memorandum of the 12th August last, which accompanied it ; and has very reluctantly arrived at the conclusion that it is a subject on which they are unable to offer an opinion until Parliament has been consulted. They did not submit the matter to Parliament last session, as they had not received answers from the various colonies with which they had communicated ; but next session they shall advise His Excellency that all papers bearing on the subject be presented to Parliament for consideration.

Wellington, 7th November, 1885.

ROBERT STOUT.