

matter and on separate slips marked "Slip A.," "Slip B.," "Slip C.," which were to be inserted in the indicated passages of the printed correspondence. This fact I announced to the House of Representatives on the 18th July, when I produced, and submitted for the inspection of the House, the correspondence in its complete form, with the suggested alterations as made in the handwriting of Sir Harry Atkinson, and including, as a matter of course, the printed copy of the French Vice-Consul's letter of the 11th September, 1888, which forms the basis of the correspondence. It is scarcely necessary for me to add, for your Lordship's information, that the Premier has not had the hardihood since to reiterate his denial, or the manliness to apologize for his untrue statement.

Further, I would add that, after the correspondence in question was put into print for the convenience of His Excellency the then Governor (Sir William Jervois), and after my memorandum of the 29th September, 1888, was corrected to His Excellency's satisfaction—for Sir William Jervois, at a later stage, asked me to alter one phrase in the memorandum, a request to which I readily and willingly acceded—ten complete copies of the correspondence were printed for His Excellency, at His Excellency's request, to be forwarded, as I understood, to the Imperial authorities. The correspondence being in print, and these ten copies being printed, I asked the Government Printer to print off 200 copies, as I fully expected the correspondence would be asked for in Parliament when it met, inasmuch as the French Vice-Consul (Count Jouffroy d'Abbans) had already forwarded copies of his letter of the 11th September, 1888—the letter to His Excellency the Governor (Sir William Jervois) containing the charge against me—to the French Consul-General in Sydney, to the Minister of Marine at Paris, and to the Minister of Foreign Affairs at Paris, and inasmuch as at that date there had been "publication," although not by me. For instance, the contents of the letter sent by the French Vice-Consul at Wellington to the French Consul-General at Sydney were at once made public throughout the Colony of New Zealand by means of a telegram forwarded from Sydney to New Zealand on the 21st September, 1888. The following is a copy of the telegram: "Sydney, 21st September, 1888.—The French Consul-General here has expressed indignation at the action of a Minister of the Crown in New Zealand, who, it is stated, prominently concerned himself in Gasparini's behalf in reference to raising subscriptions to defray the cost of applying for a writ of *habeas corpus* for the release of the prisoner in Sydney. An official communication has been received by the Consul-General stating that the Minister referred to conversed with Gasparini on the Wellington wharf just prior to the departure of the steamer 'Wakatipu,' and that he also gave messages to the detective who was in charge of the prisoner."

This telegram, which contains the whole burden of the French Vice-Consul's letter to His Excellency Sir William Jervois of the 11th September, 1888, and which publicly and seriously reflected upon me as a Minister of the Crown, was published in the newspapers throughout New Zealand on the 22nd September, before my memorandum of the 29th September had reached His Excellency, and, your Lordship will notice, was referred to in the discussions upon the subject which have since taken place in Parliament. Mr. Seddon, member for Kumara, in his place in Parliament, announced it to have been his intention to impeach the Government in consequence of the statements contained in that telegram. It is therefore manifest that the French Vice-Consul's request to the Premier that the correspondence should not be "published" could only be construed as meaning that my answer, my vindication, to his published charge should not be made public; for, of course, the publication just referred to by me could only have taken place at the instance, or at least with the knowledge, of the French authorities.

As a matter of course, as Consular Agent for Italy, I sent four copies of the correspondence to the Italian Consul-General, at Melbourne, to be forwarded to the Italian authorities at Rome; and perhaps I may be pardoned, in passing, for inviting your Lordship's attention to the fact that I have since received from Signor Crispi, the Italian Premier, an intimation of his approval of my action in all proceedings connected with the Gasparini case. I also sent two copies of the correspondence to two gentlemen in this colony who had kindly assisted me in conducting the delicate negotiations with His Excellency the Governor (Sir William Jervois) and the French Vice-Consul (Count d'Abbans). These two copies were marked "Confidential and secret." The remainder of the 200 copies have not at any time been out of my custody, and are at this moment in my possession; and I ask your Lordship to observe that it was not until after the correspondence sent by the French Vice-Consul to Sydney had been made public by the telegram above referred to that I sent the four copies to the Italian Consul-General at Melbourne, which, in any event, I was in duty bound to do. A comparison of dates will show that the French Vice-Consul's letter to His Excellency the Governor (Sir William Jervois), making against me the grave charge which I have since so abundantly refuted, was dated the 11th September, 1888, the telegram from Sydney is dated the 21st September, 1888, and now (September, 1889), twelve months after the date of the original charge, I, by resolution of Parliament, get my refutation fully and fairly before the world, only to have attached to it the wounding stigma contained in the letter of His Excellency Lord Onslow of the 4th July last.

As to the second 200 copies of the correspondence referred to by Sir Harry Atkinson in his speech of the 12th July, they never reached me. They were, as Sir Harry Atkinson explained, sent back to the Printing Office by my Private Secretary to be destroyed as waste-paper, in consequence of some mistake in the printing.

Thus, my Lord, I have not "published" or circulated the correspondence, and there is therefore no justification whatever for the statement contained in His Excellency's letter of the 4th July, 1889, that "the fulfilment of M. Jouffroy d'Abbans's wish" has been "frustrated by the unjustifiable act of Mr. Fisher."

In regard to the trivial circumstance of the attachment to the 200 copies of the Government Printer's imprint, which contains the stereotyped words "By authority"—the trifling occurrence so painfully laboured by Sir Harry Atkinson in his speech of the 12th July—it is perhaps advisable to