

the information previously received by telegraph—namely, that the expediency of making any constitutional change in the mode of appointing the Governor of an Australian Colony has not been established. They believe, in fact, that the objections stated in the letter addressed on the 15th November last to the Agent-General for South Australia, a copy of which is annexed for convenience of reference, greatly outweigh the advantage which they might in some cases derive from a knowledge of the opinion of the gentlemen at the time serving as colonial Ministers.

Her Majesty's Government feel that they are justified in claiming, for themselves as well as for their predecessors, that a remarkable measure of success, both as regards the capacity and character of the Governors appointed, and as regards the approval with which those appointments have been received in the colonies, has attended the sincere endeavours which have at all times been made to secure the best possible selection in each case. They desire, at the same time, to point out the difficulties which might arise if the area of selection were absolutely limited, as has been suggested, to persons who have held high political office in England, or have been members of the Imperial Parliament. Such persons are frequently not prepared to retire from a promising public career at Home in order to serve out of England for a term of years, and it is worthy of observation that the suggested limitation would have excluded almost all of the most successful Australasian Governors.

It appears, indeed, to be necessary on every ground that Her Majesty's Government should conduct, without assistance from the colony, the confidential negotiations preliminary to the selection of a Governor, while they could not invite a person so selected by them to allow his name to be submitted for the approval of gentlemen at a distance, to whom (though well and favourably known here) he may be altogether unknown.

I can therefore only repeat that the true interests of the colonies, and the preservation of friendly and constitutional relations between the colonies and this country, will, in the opinion of Her Majesty's Government, be best secured by adhering to the principles upon which the appointment of Governor has hitherto been made.

I have, &c.,

KNUTSFORD.

The Governors of the Australian Colonies and New Zealand.

#### Enclosure.

The COLONIAL OFFICE to the AGENT-GENERAL for SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

SIR,—

Downing Street, 15th November, 1883.

I am directed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 13th instant, conveying the renewed request of your Government that they may have an opportunity, before any appointment is made, of expressing an opinion with regard to the person whom it may be proposed to appoint as Governor of South Australia.

Lord Knutsford regrets that he is not able to give to this request any other answer than that returned to the Government of Queensland last month, in the letter which was read in the House of Commons by the Under-Secretary of State on Monday last. It would be a great satisfaction and assistance to the Secretary of State in the performance of a very responsible duty if it were possible in some manner to ascertain, before the Queen's pleasure is taken, that the gentleman whom he thinks suitable is also acceptable to the Government and people of the colony in which he is to represent Her Majesty for several years; and Lord Knutsford trusts that it will be understood that the inability of Her Majesty's Government to comply with the wish of your Ministers in this matter is in no way connected with any indisposition to consult their views in other cases whenever practicable.

As Lord Knutsford stated to the Agent-General for Queensland, Her Majesty's Government feel precluded, by the conditions of the Governor's office, from having recourse to the advice of the colonial Ministry in regard to the selection of a Governor. There are certain extra-colonial functions in the discharge of which the Governor must be responsible to the Crown alone, and his action in regard to which does not interfere with or affect the full responsibility of the Ministry in the internal affairs of the colony. But, independently of his more strictly Imperial duties, the Governor occupies a position in regard to political matters which appears to preclude the local Ministry from taking any part in his selection. The antagonism between parties in the colonial Parliaments has frequently been very strong, and on the retirement of the Ministry which had virtually controlled the selection of the Governor the succeeding Ministry might not improbably feel doubt as to his impartiality. For example, in dealing with the question—often one of much difficulty—whether a dissolution of Parliament ought to be granted or withheld, if the Governor should, however *bona fide*, act in accordance with the political interests of the party which had