

No. 24.

TELEGRAM FROM SECRETARY OF STATE.—24th August, 1889.

No. 9.

REFERRING to my telegram of 17th April, important to know decision of Colonial Government, Cook's Island, by early opportunity.

No. 25.

(New Zealand, No. 27.)

MY LORD,—

Downing Street, 27th August, 1889.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your unnumbered despatch of the 12th ultimo, enclosing a return of Volunteers in New Zealand for the month of May.

These returns are supplied annually from other colonies, and, if equally convenient to your Government, a similar course may be followed in New Zealand, notwithstanding the instructions contained in my circular despatch of the 16th August, 1887.

I have, &c.,

KNUTSFORD.

Governor the Right Hon. the Earl of Onslow, G.C.M.G., &c.

No. 26.

(Circular.)

SIR,—

Downing Street, 31st August, 1889.

In my telegram of the 6th March, 1888, I informed you that Her Majesty's Government had determined to meet the wish expressed by the colonies at the Conference of 1887, and to supply new-type guns for the armaments of King George's Sound and Thursday Island, on the understanding that the colonies would be ready to construct the necessary works and maintain garrisons of the strength laid down in No. 67 paper, laid before the Conference.

I regret that the prolonged interdepartmental correspondence has hitherto prevented me from fulfilling my promise to communicate full details on this subject, but I am now enabled to place before you in a complete form the proposals of Her Majesty's Government with regard to the defences of these important stations.

As you are aware, Her Majesty's Government, in the memorandum which I laid before the Colonial Conference, intimated their readiness to provide the following armament for King George's Sound: Four 8in. R.M.L. guns, two 40-pr. R.B.L. guns, four 9-pr. R.M.L. guns (on field-carriages), submarine mines and stores valued at £3,500; and for Thursday Island—Four 7in. R.M.L. guns, four 16-pr. R.M.L. guns (on field-carriages). The total value of these armaments would have been £12,726.

On the other hand, a total estimated first cost for the necessary works and barracks at these stations—for King George's Sound, £12,700, and for Thursday Island, £14,800—would fall on the Australasian Colonies, together with that of providing and maintaining the necessary permanent garrisons.

The colonial delegates, while agreeing generally in the principle of joint action in relation to these two stations, strongly objected to the above scheme, on the ground that the heavy guns, 8in. and 7in. R.M.L., which the Imperial Government offered, were not sufficiently powerful for the requirements, and that 6in. B.L. guns should be given in their place.

The subject was not then further discussed, but Her Majesty's Government undertook to reconsider the question of the guns, and the delegates of Western Australia intimated that if the new-type guns were provided at Imperial charge they would recommend to the Government of that colony to relieve the other colonies by undertaking to pay the sum of £5,000 out of the £12,700, the estimated cost of constructing the works at King George's Sound, and to provide one-fourth of the cost of maintenance of the works and garrison there.

After careful consideration Her Majesty's Government decided to meet the wishes of the colony by providing for the defence of King George's Sound, instead of the armament previously proposed—Three 6in. B.L. guns, six