

6. I have therefore decided to accept the advice of Ministers, although it appears to me that the Royal prerogative of mercy is being used in this case to override a law which Ministers think public opinion would not suffer to be put in force. If ever the extreme sentence of the law ought to be inflicted for child-murder it is in a clear and inexcusable case like the present one.

7. It appears to me that the proper and logical course would be to propose an alteration in this law to meet any further cases of child-murder.

8. I may add, in reference to my despatch, No. 12, of 7th February last, that, had I entertained very strong opinions that society would be in danger unless these criminals were hanged as a warning to others, a very serious conflict might have arisen between me and my Ministers, who would undoubtedly have been supported by public opinion. It is far from impossible that such an attitude might be assumed by the Governor and Ministers respectively in reference to some case where the sex of the criminal and the nature of the offence would not, as in this instance, predispose the Governor to lean to a merciful consideration of the case.

I have, &c.,

The Right Hon. Lord Knutsford, &c.

ONSLOW.

No. 15.

(No. 21.)

MY LORD,—

Government House, Auckland, 3rd April, 1891.

At the Postal Convention recently held at Sydney the Hon. J. G. Ward, Postmaster-General of New Zealand, moved the following resolution: "That this Conference approves of the negotiations that are now understood to be under consideration of the Pacific Railway Company for establishing a "Canadian Australasian mail-service." This was seconded by Mr. Unmack, of Queensland, who stated that it was proposed that the Australasian Colonies should contribute £30,000 for this service, and of this, Queensland was ready to contribute £10,000.

2. The representatives of Victoria and New South Wales said that the Cabinets of those colonies had not sufficiently considered the question to allow them to pledge themselves by adopting the resolution; but they admitted that the establishment of this service was very desirable, and would have a beneficial effect in every way.

3. As the representatives of New Zealand and Queensland had declined to join in the proposed cable guarantee, the consideration of which was the main object of the Conference, it was hardly to be expected that a proposal emanating from those colonies which would be chiefly benefited by the establishment of such a mail-service as that referred to would be at once accepted by the Conference.

4. Mr. Ward therefore withdrew his motion, declaring himself satisfied with the expressions of opinion elicited.

I have, &c.,

The Right Hon. Lord Knutsford, &c.

ONSLOW.

No. 16.

(No. 22.)

MY LORD,—

Government House, Auckland, 4th April, 1891.

Since I have been in this colony it has been my endeavour to visit as many as possible of the Native tribes. I have not addressed your Lordship before on Native matters, inasmuch as there cannot be said to be any which call for special remark. The Maoris conform to the laws, evince a growing disposition to facilitate settlement on their land, and for the time there are evidences that their tendency to diminish in numbers has received a check. I shall be able to speak with greater certainty on the latter point after the next census.

2. I visited last year the Natives in the King-country, who for so many years declined to have any intercourse with Europeans. I have also visited the Natives living with Te Whiti at Parihaka, whence your Lordship may remember it was found necessary in 1881 to drive out all the Natives by force, in order to