

footing, and that commercial and other considerations render it clearly desirable to maintain good relations with China by making concessions to the feelings of that country in other matters.

I have, &c.,
KNUTSFORD.

The Officer Administering the Government of New Zealand.

SIEH TA-JÊN to the Marquis of SALISBURY.

MY LORD,—

Chinese Legation, 25th September, 1890.

Though the number of Chinese subjects residing in Her Britannic Majesty's dominions is so great, and the relations between China and Great Britain have been going on in ever-increasing cordiality and importance, Singapore still continues to be the only place in which the Chinese Government has either a Consul or a Consular Agent.

I have therefore the honour to state that, with a view to the removal of such anomaly, and the establishment of a state of matters which would more properly characterize the friendly relations which now happily exist between the two countries, and the regard with which the Imperial Government naturally entertains for the interests of Chinese subjects residing abroad, the Tsung-li Yâmen have instructed me to invite your Lordship to an exchange of views on the general question of Chinese consular representation in Her Britannic Majesty's dominions.

In connection with the appointment of a Chinese Consul to Singapore, your Lordship, in a despatch dated the 16th April, 1878, replying to Kwo Ta-jên, the then Chinese Minister to this Court, pointed out to him that the relations of China with the rest of the world were not founded on the comity of nations, but on peculiar and exceptional treaty stipulations, and that therefore, as China had not thrown her country open to foreigners and foreign commerce, she could hardly appeal to the example of foreign nations in applying for permission to make consular appointments in Her Majesty's dominions. With whatever justice this may be said to have been the case in respect of the relations of China with foreign nations in 1878 it will scarcely be held as accurately describing them at the present date. China has never at any time repudiated the obligations imposed on her by the law of nations, and her actions, more particularly within the last fifteen years, have been regulated by a general and always-increasing conformity to it. I would therefore submit that, though as yet she may not, excepting in a limited sense, have thrown her country open to foreigners and foreign commerce, she has still done enough to entitle her to hope that the privilege of making consular appointments in Her Majesty's dominions will be accorded her in the measure and under the same circumstances and regulations as that privilege is granted to other friendly nations. At more than twenty ports and places in the Chinese Empire foreigners are allowed to reside and carry on commerce on conditions which, as compared to what takes place in the territories of many of the treaty Powers, may almost be considered as free-trade, and at twenty-two of these emporia Her Britannic Majesty is represented by Consuls or Consular Agents.

In offering these remarks for your Lordship's favourable consideration, I would premise that I make them rather by way of explanation than of forestalling any objections Her Majesty's Government may have to recognising the reasonableness of the claim I have been directed to put forward; for I do not anticipate that Her Majesty's Government will experience any difficulty in allowing it, and this all the rather as the Chefoo Convention, an instrument which had not been ratified at the time the despatch in question was written, impliedly recognises the right of China to Consular representation in Her Majesty's dominions, whilst in the Supplementary Convention of the 24th October, 1869, the right of China to appoint Consuls in all parts of the British dominions is accorded in express terms. I am aware that ratification of the latter Convention was refused by Her Majesty's Government, and I refer to it here only as showing what Her Majesty's Government would have been prepared to grant had not, for other reasons, the Convention been unacceptable.

In conclusion, I would wish to state that, should an understanding on the subject of the general principle of Chinese consular appointments be the result of our interchange of views, the Imperial Government would not take advantage of it to any great extent at present, but only apply for *exequaturs* from time to time as circumstances may require.

I have, &c.,
SIEH.

The Marquis of SALISBURY to SIEH TA-JÊN.

M. LE MINISTRE,—

Foreign Office, 20th November, 1890.

With reference to my note of the 9th ultimo, I have now the honour to state to you that Her Majesty's Government have given careful consideration to the wish of the Chinese Government to appoint consular representatives in Her Majesty's dominions.

It gives me much pleasure to inform you that, as a matter of principle, Her Majesty's Government will be prepared to grant *exequaturs* to consular officers appointed by the Chinese Government on the same footing as the consular officers of other friendly Powers. In some exceptional cases, however, it may not be possible, owing to local considerations, to issue *exequaturs* at the present time, and Her Majesty's Government must reserve the free exercise of their discretion in this respect.

I have, &c.,
SALISBURY.

No. 11.

(Circular.)

SIR,—

Downing Street, 6th February, 1891.

With reference to my predecessor's circular despatches of the 10th of June and 20th of August, 1886, I have the honour to inform you that the