

No. 5.

THE Premier presents his compliments to His Excellency, and, after asking Sir Patrick Buckley to give the result of his experience as the representative of the Government in the Legislative Council, presents the following statement of parties in the Council, also the probable effect of the addition of twelve members :—

An inspection of the division-lists of last session on critical points of policy will show that the Government could, as a rule, only rely on the support of five members. These were Sir P. A. Buckley and Messrs. Dignan, Taiaroa, Shrimski, and Wilson. Of the five, two did not invariably vote with the Ministry. They did, however, usually do so. Since last year, however, Mr. Wilson, the most consistent supporter of the Government in the Council, has left the colony with the intention of not returning; and Mr. Shrimski is also absent through ill-health. Sir Patrick Buckley has, therefore, now only Messrs. Dignan and Taiaroa on whom to depend. Of course, two or three Councillors will often vote with him, some on this question, some on that; but on those critical points of policy in dispute between the Council and the Lower Chamber Sir Patrick can only count positively on two certain supporters.

The addition of twelve Councillors would give the Government the hope of fifteen votes: though this would still leave Ministers in a clear minority, it would insure full discussion for their measures. At present, beyond the speech of the Minister in charge, no advocacy is given in the Council to the Government policy. Its demerits are ably urged by many speakers, its merits are not even heard beyond the speech of the Minister. The addition of twelve members would raise the numerical strength of the Council to forty-seven. Ministers respectfully submit, a following of fifteen or sixteen is not an undue strength for the Government to possess in a Council of that size.

Ministers are charged with the Government of the country, and they are responsible for the proper transaction of parliamentary business; yet in the Legislative Council at the present time they can neither have their measures fairly debated nor can they be represented on Committees. In the House of Representatives it is admittedly proper for the Government to have a majority on Committees; in the Council Ministers cannot even be secure of having an appreciable minority of supporters present at any Committee discussion.

Premier's Office, Wellington, 1st August, 1892.

J. BALLANCE.

No. 6.

MEMORANDUM for the PREMIER.

HIS Excellency the Governor thanks the Premier for the memorandum of this date on the state of parties in the Legislative Council, but he begs to point out that the information given him is not as to the strength of parties, but as to the support which the Attorney-General receives in that Chamber.

HIS Excellency need not remind the Premier that the power of determining the number of appointments to be made to the Legislative Council is vested in him, in order that the liberties of that body may not be infringed in order to meet party exigencies.

Consequently, he must be certified that, when the policy of the present Government is settled, one way or the other, the complexion of the majority of the Legislative Council will not be altered by the appointments proposed to be made.

For this purpose he requests to be informed of the number of appointments in the Council which have been made by Liberal or advanced Governments and by Conservative or moderate Governments respectively.

Wellington, 1st August, 1892.

GLASGOW.

No. 7.

REPLYING to His Excellency's memorandum of the 1st instant, and referring to His Excellency's statement "that the information given him is not as to the strength of parties, but as to the support which the Attorney-General receives in that Chamber," the Premier begs respectfully to observe that he considers the support given to the Attorney-General in the Legislative Council is an exact measure of the strength of parties—the Attorney-General representing the Government, which represents one of the great parties in the colony.

The Premier would point out that the number of appointments made in the past by Conservative and Liberal Governments respectively can throw little light upon the strength of parties in the Council, as, being appointed for life, many members have changed their politics almost invariably in the direction of Conservatism.

The Premier encloses a paper placed on the table of the House of Representatives this session showing the appointments made by the several Governments. The Government of "Grey" may be said to come under the term "Liberal or Advanced," that of "Stout" as "Coalition," the appointees being half-and-half, and all the others as "Conservatives or Moderate." This would give to the "Liberal or Advanced" nine members, and to the "Conservative or Moderate" twenty-six members. When the appointments were made the party-lines would have been indicated by the figures, but are not so in the year 1892, many of the members having changed their political views.

Premier's Office, Wellington, 2nd August, 1892.

J. BALLANCE.