

I now have the honour to enclose herewith, for your information, an opinion by the Hon. the Attorney-General, Mr. Gavan Duffy, on the subject. The circular which Mr. Duffy suggests is, of course, unnecessary in view of that which has already been issued by yourself. Having regard, however, to the desirability of an identical answer to the despatch, as suggested by Mr. Duffy, I shall be glad if you will inform me at your convenience to what extent the colonies are in accord as to the reply to be sent to the despatch.

I await this information before furnishing His Excellency the Governor with the reply of this Government.

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

WM. SHIELDS.

[COPY.]

Crown Law Offices, Melbourne, 22nd February, 1892.

I WOULD advise that the Premier communicate confidentially with the Premiers of the other Australasian Colonies, with a view to an identical answer being given to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, if possible.

2. I am of opinion that the proposed alteration in the Instructions would in reality merely amount to a declaration of the constitutional principles of, and the existing practice in, the self-governing Australasian Colonies.

3. As this declaration would define the Governor's position, and bring home to Ministers the responsibility which it is their duty to accept, I think that it would be a matter of convenience that it should be made.

J. G. D.

Enclosure No. 6.

The PREMIER of NEW ZEALAND to the PREMIER of VICTORIA.

SIR,—

Premier's Office, Wellington, 13th April, 1892.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, No. 1137, of the 25th ultimo, on the subject of the exercise of the prerogative of mercy under the Royal Instructions, and in reply to inform you that in reply to my letters I learn that Western Australia, Queensland, Victoria, and Tasmania cordially approve of the proposed alteration in the Royal Instructions. Western Australia informs me that it has already signified to Lord Knutsford its wish for the change. It only remains, therefore, for New South Wales to state its views on the question, which, I presume, will be in accord with the other Australasian Colonies.

I have, &c.,

J. BALLANCE, Premier.

P.S.—I should add that on the 15th February last His Excellency the Governor informed Lord Knutsford of the satisfaction of this Government that Her Majesty's Government is prepared to adopt the suggestion made from here.

The Hon. the Premier, Victoria.

Enclosure No. 7.

The PREMIER of NEW SOUTH WALES to the PREMIER of NEW ZEALAND.

(Telegram.)

28th May, 1892.

THIS Government concurs in proposed alteration in Royal Instruction re prerogative of mercy. I regret delay in informing you of decision, which was caused by absence of Minister of Justice.

Hon. the Prime Minister, Wellington.

F. B. SUTTOR, Colonial Secretary.

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