

Enclosure No. 2.

MY LORD,—

Colonial Office, Downing Street, 14th April, 1897.

With regard to your (1) Lordship's telegram of the 22nd ultimo; (2) Lordship's telegram of the 11th March, and despatch, No. 3, of the 29th January; (3) telegram of the 18th ultimo; and (4) telegram of the 31st ultimo—on the question of the retention of the title of "Honourable" by members of the Legislative Council after ten years' continuous service, I have the honour to observe that, as stated in my circular despatch of the 14th November last, Her Majesty had already approved of the proposal in the case of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope, through whose Government the subject was first brought to my notice, and that since then the Governments of Natal and Newfoundland have requested that the privilege may be extended to those colonies.

I have, moreover, received communications from the Governors of Queensland and New Zealand expressing the wish of their Ministers that the proposed privilege should be enjoyed by ex-members of the Legislative Council in those colonies.

It is in these circumstances that I have had to consider the resolution (No. 21B) on this subject, which was carried by a majority of four to three at the Conference of Australasian Premiers held at Hobart in February last; and as it is apparent that, had all the Responsible Governments of the Empire been represented on that occasion, there would have been a small majority in favour of the proposal, I have felt that I should not be justified in advising Her Majesty, in deference to the resolution of the majority of the representatives of the Australian Governments, to abandon the proposal in the case of any colonies whose Governments may still be in favour of its adoption.

You will, however, see from the accompanying notice published in the *London Gazette*, that the arrangement is merely permissive; and it will therefore rest with the Government of any particular colony to recommend or not any qualified person for the privilege, as it may think fit.

I have, &c.,

J. CHAMBERLAIN.

(1) Victoria; (2) Tasmania; (3) South Australia; (4) Western Australia.

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