

SESS. II.—1897.
NEW ZEALAND.

CONFERENCE BETWEEN THE SECRETARY OF STATE AND THE PREMIERS OF THE SELF-GOVERNING COLONIES

(PROCEEDINGS OF, AT THE COLONIAL OFFICE, LONDON, JUNE AND JULY, 1897).

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

PROCEEDINGS OF A CONFERENCE BETWEEN THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES
AND THE PREMIERS OF THE SELF-GOVERNING COLONIES, AT THE COLONIAL OFFICE,
LONDON, JUNE AND JULY, 1897.

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN to Governor-General the Earl of ABERDEEN (Canada).*

MY LORD,—

Downing Street, 13th August, 1897.

In my despatch of the 28th January last, conveying to the Premiers of the self-governing colonies the invitation to be present at and take part in the celebration of the Sixtieth Anniversary of Her Majesty's Accession, I intimated to you the hope of Her Majesty's Government that their presence here might afford a valuable opportunity for the informal discussion of many subjects of great interest to the Empire. I have now the honour to enclose for your information a memorandum showing how that hope was fully realised, and giving an account of the business transacted.

Her Majesty's Government desire to put on record their strong sense of the loyal and patriotic spirit which was shown by all the representatives of the colonies in the course of their discussions. They are well aware that many of them came here at considerable sacrifice of personal convenience, but they hope that their colonial colleagues are satisfied that their visit has been productive of great advantage to the Empire, and that the conferences which have been held have resulted in such a free interchange of views as will have a lasting and beneficial effect in securing a complete mutual understanding between the colonies and the Mother-country.

I have, &c.,

J. CHAMBERLAIN.

* A similar despatch was addressed to—Governor Viscount Hampden, New South Wales; Governor Lord Brassey, Victoria; Governor the Earl of Ranfurly, New Zealand; Governor Lord Lamington, Queensland; Governor Sir Alfred Milner, Cape of Good Hope; Governor Sir T. F. Buxton, South Australia; Governor Sir H. H. Murray, Newfoundland; Governor Viscount Gormanston, Tasmania; Governor Sir G. Smith, Western Australia; and Governor Sir W. F. Hely-Hutchinson, Natal.

MEMORANDUM.

ON Thursday, the 24th June, the Prime Ministers of Canada, New South Wales, Victoria, New Zealand, Queensland, Cape Colony, South Australia, Newfoundland, Tasmania, Western Australia, and Natal assembled at the Colonial Office, Downing Street, for the discussion of certain Imperial questions with the Secretary of State for the Colonies. It was decided that the proceedings should be informal and that the general results only should be published. With the view of giving a definite direction to the discussion, the Secretary of State, in opening the proceedings, set forth the subjects which he considered might usefully be discussed, so as to secure an interchange of views upon them, and where they were ripe for a statement of opinion, a definite resolution in regard to them, in the following speech :—

" I have made arrangements for a full shorthand report of all our proceedings, which will be confidential, unless we otherwise desire, but copies, of course, will be furnished to every gentleman for reference, and possibly later on, if we come to any conclusions, we may consider further whether it is desirable or not that any public statement should be made. In the meantime, until we come to a united conclusion upon the subject, the proceedings will be treated as absolutely confidential.

" I desire at the outset of these proceedings to offer to you, on behalf of Her Majesty's Government, a hearty and cordial welcome. You will have seen in your short visit to this country that all parties, and all classes, are animated by the most affectionate feelings of regard towards our