

1898.

NEW ZEALAND.

D E S P A T C H

FROM THE RIGHT HON. THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES TO HIS EXCELLENCY
THE GOVERNOR OF NEW ZEALAND RELATIVE TO THE INVITATION SENT BY THE COLONY
TO THEIR ROYAL HIGHNESSES THE DUKE AND DUCHESS OF YORK.

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

(No. 19.)

MY LORD,—

Downing Street, 17th February, 1898.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch, No. 69, of the 25th of November, in which you draw attention to the invitation from both Houses of Parliament to their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of York to visit New Zealand.

I have had much pleasure in communicating this invitation to the Queen, and I am commanded by Her Majesty to express her high appreciation of the cordial manner in which your Ministers and the Houses of Parliament have requested a visit from her grandchildren, and at the same time to express her deep regret that circumstances preclude the possibility of the invitation being accepted.

The Queen does not doubt that the Duke and Duchess of York would meet with the most gratifying reception from her loyal subjects in New Zealand, and that their visit would be in every way pleasant and memorable to them, but she commands me to say that there are many and serious difficulties. Since the lamented death of Prince Henry of Battenberg, there is no prince other than the Duke of York able to relieve her sons in the discharge of the onerous duties which fall to their share as the representatives of Her Majesty, who is herself prevented by age from taking part in public functions, and, in the uncertainty of life, the Queen feels that she dare not consent to a prince so close to the Throne leaving her for a long period of time, and making a voyage to a distant part of the world.

The Duke of York desires me to add an expression of the warm thanks of himself and the Duchess for the invitation, and to say that he sincerely regrets he is unable to pay a visit to New Zealand and to bring his wife to see a country which he regards with the warmest interest.

I have, &c.,

J. CHAMBERLAIN.

Governor the Right Hon. the Earl of Ranfurly, K.C.M.G., &c.

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