

No. 5.

AUSTRALIA.—The SECRETARY OF STATE to the GOVERNOR-GENERAL.

(Sent 7 p.m., 10th January, 1913.)

TELEGRAM.

Your telegram, 9th January [*No. 4*]: Please inform your Ministers, owing to situation of public affairs here, we find it quite impossible to hold general Naval Defence Conference at date named and places suggested. Other Dominions could not attend at short notice, and it is doubtful whether they would desire a general conference at present. Defence Minister of New Zealand is now on his way to England, and Defence Minister of South Africa comes here in May for individual consultation. After your general election we shall welcome any Minister of yours who could visit England for discussion.—HARCOURT.

No. 6.

The SECRETARY OF STATE to the GOVERNORS-GENERAL and GOVERNORS [Canada, New Zealand, Union of South Africa, Newfoundland].

MY LORD [SIR],—

Downing Street, 22nd February, 1913.

With reference to statements which have appeared in the public Press as to a proposed conference upon naval defence, I have the honour to transmit to Your Royal Highness [Your Excellency] [you], for the information of your Ministers, copies of telegraphic correspondence [*Nos. 2, 3, 4, and 5*] with the Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia on the subject of a proposal of his Government that a conference should be held on the subject in Australia in January or February of this year, or, if that should not be practicable, in New Zealand, or South Africa, or Vancouver.

I have, &c.,

L. HARCOURT.

No. 7.

UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA.—The GOVERNOR-GENERAL to the SECRETARY OF STATE.

(Received 24th February, 1913.)

SIR,—

Governor-General's Office, Cape Town, 5th February, 1913.

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith, with reference to your despatch of the 10th December, 1912 [*No. 1*], a copy of a minute from Ministers, dated 30th January, 1913, on the subject of the more continuous connection of the Overseas Dominions in naval and military affairs with the Committee of Imperial Defence in the United Kingdom.

I have, &c.,

GLADSTONE, Governor-General.

Enclosure in No. 7.

Prime Minister's Office, Cape Town, 30th January, 1913.

MINISTERS have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of His Excellency's minute of the 2nd January, 1913, on the subject of the representation of the dominions on the Committee of Imperial Defence, and His Excellency's minute of the 2nd January, 1913, covering copies of secret printed documents dealing with the same subject.

2. Ministers desire to express their appreciation of the views expressed by the Right Hon. the Secretary of State contained in his despatch of the 10th December, 1912, and of the readiness evinced by His Majesty's Government to make provision, through the machinery of the Imperial Defence Committee, for more frequent opportunities of consultations between the Imperial and Dominion Governments.

Ministers have noted with pleasure that, as Mr. Secretary Harcourt clearly indicates, no new departure in constitutional practice is intended, but that the proposals of His Majesty's Government are simply a further expression of that spirit of mutual consultation and helpful co-operation which in the past has so happily animated the British Government in its relations to the Governments of the self-governing dominions.

3. Not only have matters of grave military and naval concern to the Empire and its component parts been very fully and frequently discussed at various Imperial Defence Conferences, but, at meetings of the Imperial Defence Committee, His Majesty's Government have made to representatives of the Dominion Governments full and frank disclosures on very important aspects of Imperial foreign policy. In the interval between these conferences Ministers have repeatedly received from the Overseas Sub-Committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence the most valuable technical advice in regard to defence arrangements for the Union.

4. The existing machinery for consultation and suggestion has thus worked so smoothly that Ministers would be loth to see any new departure inaugurated which might in the end prove less satisfactory in practice. In particular they doubt whether the idea of a Minister of the Union residing in London for the purpose of constantly representing the Union Government on the Imperial Defence Committee is practicable.

5. As long as the control of foreign policy remains, as under present conditions it must necessarily remain, solely with the Imperial Government, and the Imperial Government con-