

1853.

VICTORIA.

CESSATION OF TRANSPORTATION.

Ordered by the Council to be printed, 31st August, 1853.

C. J. LA TROBE,
Lieutenant Governor.

Message No. 10.

It is with sincere pleasure that the Lieutenant Governor directs to be laid upon the Table of the Legislative Council, the enclosed copy of a Despatch from His Grace the Duke of Newcastle, transmitting to His Excellency the copy of a communication addressed by the Secretary of State to Lieutenant Governor Sir William Denison, announcing the resolution of Her Majesty's Government to put an end forthwith to Transportation to Van Diemen's Land.

*Government Offices,
Melbourne, 31st August, 1853.*

(COPY.)

No. 29.

Downing-street,
22nd February, 1853.

SIR,

I enclose for your information the accompanying copy of a Despatch, which I have had occasion to address to Sir William Denison, announcing the resolution of Her Majesty's Government to put an end forthwith to Transportation to Van Diemen's Land.

I have the honor to be

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

(Signed) NEWCASTLE.

Lieutenant Governor La Trobe,
&c., &c., &c.

(COPY.)

Downing-street,
22nd February, 1853.

SIR,

From the terms of my recent Despatch, No. 17. of the 7th instant, you will have gathered that Her Majesty's present advisers had concurred in and adopted the intention, which was announced by my predecessor in his Despatch No. 137. of the 14th of December last, of discontinuing Transportation to Van Diemen's Land.

When my predecessor addressed that Despatch to you, he declared his purpose of putting an end to Transportation at the earliest practicable moment, but there had not yet been time for him to make the necessary inquiries with sufficient accuracy to admit of his fixing the exact date for carrying his intention into execution.

The subject has not failed to receive the earnest consideration of Her Majesty's present Government. After collecting the best information in their power from official sources, they are led to believe that although considerable time must be required to complete more permanent arrangements, there will be no insuperable obstacle to finding room in the existing prisons in Great Britain, aided by the other establishments abroad, for the number of convicts likely to come on the hands of the Government.

Considering then that there would be much inconvenience in continuing in Van Diemen's Land for a short but indefinite term a system avowedly condemned for the future, by which course the social arrangements of the Colony would be left in an unsettled and uncertain state, knowing also that the majority of the inhabitants of the Colony itself, and almost the whole population of the neighbouring colonies, whose interests are deeply involved in the question are in favor of the discontinuance of the system, and feeling that the altered circumstances of Australia since the discovery of gold must wholly change the penal character of Transportation, Her Majesty's Government have come to the resolution of putting an end at once to the removal of Convicts to Van Diemen's Land. The requisite arrangements at home and elsewhere will require much care and activity, but into these it is unnecessary that I should enter, as they will not concern the Colony.

It will necessarily be a long time before all the Prisoners now in the Colony will be absolved from their convict condition, and the establishments can only be gradually reduced,
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taking care to maintain a sufficient strength for the due preservation of discipline amongst all who remain as Convicts in Van Diemen's Land. Both in superintending the actual duties, and in suggesting the principles upon which progressive reductions may be made, I am satisfied that the able services of Mr. Hampton will continue to be as valuable as they have been throughout his administration of the arduous department entrusted to his charge. You will call on him for a Report of his views of the best course to be taken for the future, and I shall be glad to receive this from you at an early date, with your own observations on the same subject.

In the mean while I have to announce to you that no more convict ships will be sent out, and though I am well aware that this decision is at variance with the opinions which you have been led to entertain as to the real interests of the Colony, I am equally confident that your accustomed zeal and discretion will be exercised in endeavouring to introduce the new order of things successfully, and to promote all such measures as may seem necessary, in order to modify the temporary inconvenience which must necessarily attend any such great alteration in the social condition of a people.

Lieutenant Governor Sir William Denison,
&c., &c., &c.

(Signed) I have, &c.,
NEWCASTLE.