



Legislative Assembly Office,
Sydney, 20th February, 1899.

Sir,

In reply to your letter of the 7th instant on the subject of the printing of the papers laid upon the Table in reference to Norfolk Island, I have the honor to inform you that I have submitted the matter to Mr Speaker who has authorised the omission of the notes made during a conversation between the Reverend Mr Robin and yourself, as they are clearly confidential and were placed with the Papers in error.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

J. W. Moff.

C.B.
William Houston, Esquire, J.P.
Under Secretary
for Lands

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Submitted for information

C. Houston
27 FEB. 99 Under Secretary

Put away

H

27-2-99



(COPY)

Department of Lands

Sydney, 7th February 1899

Sir

I have the honor by direction of the Secretary for Lands to invite your attention to the fact that by an accident certain notes made during a conversation between the Rev. Mr Robin of the Melanesian Mission and myself, were laid on the Table of the House with copies of Norfolk Island papers. It is understood that these notes may probably be printed, and that as a matter of fact they are already in type

It will be noticed that Mr Robin had not made any written communication and that he merely called at this Department in obedience to a request of His Excellency. Certain notes were taken of the impressions which were left on my mind during a conversation I had with him; and it is only fair to him to point out that the notes were taken in a short and unqualified way and without the slightest expectation that they would be made public.

Mr Robin's note to myself was of a semi official nature, and Mr Carruthers is strongly of opinion that neither this letter nor the notes taken during the interview can strictly be called papers in the case. Indeed it would be open to him (Mr Robins) to plead that the notes were not a correct reflection of any opinions of his own.

In any circumstances, however, the publication of the notes would be in the highest degree impolitic and might produce misunderstandings and create embarrassing situations, which should for various consider-

F.W. Webb Esq. C.M.G. ations, in view of the delicate situation of Norfolk
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly Island

Parliament House

Sydney

Island affairs, be avoided in the public interest.

Even if Mr Robin's letter and the notes cannot now be expunged or their publication postponed, Mr Carruthers considers it would be better that the names of the different persons appearing in the notes should not be printed in full but that asterisks should be substituted, and that page 225 of the papers when finally printed might appear as altered in the proof copy herewith .

It is noticed on page 625 ninth edition of May's Parliamentary Practice that "papers & correspondence sought from Government Departments should be of a public and official character and not private or confidential" and it is presumed and hoped that as this principle has been accidentally overlooked, the exclusion of the papers in question will be found practicable.

I have the honor to be

Sir

Your obedient Servant

W. Houston

Under Secretary

The accompanying rough printed proof-copy of the Norfolk Island papers laid on the Table of the House by order of Parliament is submitted for the Minister's information.

The proof has been sent here merely for the purpose of expressing an opinion as to the arrangement of the various items contained in it, but I observe many repetitions which might perhaps have been avoided and that there are certain eliminations which could be made with advantage.

For instance there can be no doubt that it was never intended to include the private notes, marked by pencil on page 225 referring to the signatories to petition after consultation with the Rev. Mr Robin of Norfolk Island - which were placed with the petition only for convenience sake.

I may explain His Excellency the Governor desired that Mr Robin should see this petition and he was accordingly allowed to peruse it with the result that he expressed the opinion that the majority of the persons signing it have private cause for grievance, and some not being permanent residents have no right to sign a document of the sort.

The Minister noted this as seen, and clearly the matter ended there, but by an accident the typist included the private notes, which are of no public benefit and should not be allowed to stand as they can only serve to bring the Melanesian Mission, of which Mr Robins is a Member, and which has always refrained from mixing itself up in the general affairs of the Island, into disastrous difficulties and cause immeasurable trouble in other directions

This

This was explained to Mr Webb, the Clerk of Parliament, and other matters in the proofs pointed out to him, but he has no authority, he stated, to order any eliminations and the Printing Committee ^{being} defunct by reason of the prorogation of Parliament, no reference can be made to it.

As however the trouble that is sure to arise may become far reaching, viewing the peculiar circumstances of the Island, it is suggested that the matter be represented to the Deputy Speaker as forcibly as possible in the hope that he may see his way at last to eliminate the notes, and thus assist in averting what may become a great public calamity.

H.S.



The attention of the Minister is invited to the fact that by an ^{accident} unfortunate inadvertence certain notes made during a conversation between the Rev. Mr Robin and myself were laid on the Table of the House with copies of Norfolk Island papers. It is understood that these notes may probably be printed, and that as a matter of fact they are already in type.

It will be noticed that Mr Robin had not made any written communication and that he merely called at this Department in obedience to a request of His Excellency. Certain notes were taken of the impressions which were left on my mind during a conversation I had with him; and it is only fair to him to point out that the notes were taken in a short and unqualified way and without the slightest expectation that they would be made public.

The opinion is ventured that Mr Robin's note to myself was of a semi official nature, and that neither his letter nor the notes taken during the interview can strictly be called papers in the case. Indeed it would be open to him to plead that the notes were not a correct reflection of any opinions of his own.

In any circumstances, however, the publication of the notes would be, in the highest degree, impolitic, and might produce misunderstandings and create embarrassing situations, which should for
various

99. 154 908

various considerations , be carefully avoided.

Even if Mr Robin's letter and the notes cannot now be expunged or their publication postponed it would be better that the names of the different persons ^{appearing in the notes} should not be printed in full but that asterisks should take the place of the names.

It is noticed on page 625 ninth edition of May's Parliamentary Practice that "papers & Correspondence sought from Government Departments" should be of a public and official character and "not private or confidential" and it is presumed and hoped that as this principle has been accidentally overlooked the exclusion of the papers in question will be found practicable.

~~W. Webb~~
6/2/99

W. Webb - Clerk of Legislative Assembly -
written to accordingly 7.2.99

W. Webb 9

*Y
The Robinson
papers*

Department of Lands

Sydney, 7th February 1899

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I have the honor by the direction of the Secretary for Lands to invite your attention to the fact that by an accident certain notes made during a conversation between the Rev, Mr Robin of the Melanesian Mission and myself, were laid on the Table of the House with copies of Norfolk Island papers. It is understood that these notes may probably be printed, and that as a matter of fact they are already in type.

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Mr Robin's note to myself was of a semi official nature, and Mr Carruthers is strongly of opinion that neither this letter nor the notes taken during the interview can ~~be~~ strictly be called papers in the case. Indeed it would be open to him (Mr Robins) to plead that the notes were not a correct reflection of any opinions of his own.

In any circumstances, however, the publication

F.W.Webb Esq C.M.G.

of

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Parliament House

Sydney

of the notes would be in the highest degree impolitic and might produce misunderstandings and create embarrassing situations, which should for various considerations, in view of the delicate situation of Norfolk Island affairs, be avoided in the public interest.

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Sir

Your obedient Servant

Under Secretary

be fair copy

Department of Lands
Sydney 7th February 1899

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Interviewer

~~The opinion is ventured that Mr Robin's note to myself was of a semi official nature, and that neither his letter nor the notes taken during the interview can strictly be called papers in the case. Indeed it would be open to him to plead that the notes were not a correct reflection of any opinions of his own.~~ ^{strongly of opinion}

In any circumstances, however, the publication of

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Clerk of the Legislative Assembly
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Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

Und er Secretary



(1)

- (1) Page 10 - Letter from C. to W. 5 Sept 90 first
- (2) - do - W's minutes of 25.2.98 should follow.
- (3) Page 10 - See W's minutes of 10.2.98.
- (4) - do - - do - 17.3.98
- (5) - do - See Minutes approved - down to under
~~Report of the Board~~ 18.3.98
- (6) - do - Enclosure to 9/550 - could be dropped
though no harm would result if left in
- (7) Page 11 - See list of papers left in the Quaker's Garden
- (8) Page 10 - See letter from W to C. 17.3.98
- (9) - do - Mr Brodie transmitting general report
20.6.90 - after words 'Principal W.'
- (10) Page 11 - Mr Brodie returning papers.
- Rehibit A - See to follow - to come in report of
B on page 12.
- 15 - See page 13 - 7000. This is a copy of

Notes on page 57 - Exhibit K - should come from
in that exhibit - the Brookes memo to follow
them pages 55 - to 60.

See Page 56 - Young Spaldings letter to US agent
be omitted.

do - 225 Notes re Signatories to posthumous affidavit
interview with Mr Rubin might be
omitted.

do - 226 Interview with Mr Craig might stand

do - 227 Read Mr Habbs two letters as
to whether either SA be dropped.

h/m/ Each exhibit volume should be prepared
into a full sheet of paper with the
name of the exhibit written on it
for ready reference.

10

11

11

12

31

41

43

46

63

101

112 } Refraction

113

116 } Humble

121

128

183 } Rep

185 } Rep

189

191 } what
one more tables

206

221 } what
225 } what
226 } what