

Confidential

Launceston,

October 22, 1897.

My dear Mr. Clark,

It was with a heavy heart that I sat down after eleven o'clock on Wednesday night, suppressed an article on the Budget already in type, and wrote that about which you telegraphed to me this morning. To me it was a most unpleasant experience to have to sit down and write against one for whom I have always entertained the highest opinions one man can entertain in reference to another. I feel that I ought to say this much when I remember the unwavering friendly relationship that has existed between us since it was my good fortune and privilege to make your acquaintance. But the Telegraph has

supported the Ministry as a body, and it has supported the construction of the Emu Bay railway, and it was my duty to put aside all personal considerations, and make the paper say what, in my judgment, based on the matter published, was right. If I have misconstrued the evidence available, it has been done in all good faith. Neither I, nor any of the staff, to my knowledge, have had any communication, verbal or otherwise, with any Minister on the present disturbing subject. I mention this to assure you of the good faith in which I wrote, and to convince you that this paper takes a perfectly independent stand, uninfluenced by anybody, as it did against the popular opinion here during the passage of the Great Western Bill. I should also

time to add that it was a mere coincidence that Smith happened to ask the question mentioned in your wire in the House, and that I wrote it the same night. I had no knowledge either of his intention to ask it or the fact that he did ask it until I saw it reported in the Mercury next day. It seems to me most unfortunate that you felt compelled to leave the Ministry at this particular time. It is impossible, in dealing with it in a newspaper, to ignore the general political situation. That situation is most complicated, viewed from the standpoint of the information made public. I am keeping my mind clear of all rumors, and basing anything the paper says on what is public property. I am sending you herewith a ^{rough} proof of the leader for Saturday's issue. You will see

that your telegram appears in the most prominent position available. And you will note that the paper states its argument again at greater length than that statement contains absolutely my own reasoning, and it contains all that I could ^{or have to} say. I have written in that way, fully and unreservedly, as I am doing here, because I hope that by clearing up everything now, the whole atmosphere may be cleared ^{and that no dogma may remain to disturb the public}. As I said in my wire to you yesterday, I hope to hear that the present difficulty may be ended by your return to the Ministry. And I believe that most people up here are of the opinion that that would be the best thing that could happen for the colony and for those directly interested in the rupture. Again I assure you that you do not stand in danger of wilful misrepresentation in the Telegraph, and I ask you to accept this in the spirit in which I write. Faithfully yours
Prof. Cunningham

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P.S. - I wish to add that it is only since my return from Sydney that I heard of
the fact that you were in disagreement with the rest of the Cabinet - on this railway
question. Sir Edward Braddon spoke to me about the railway during the Convention,
but he said nothing to indicate the existence of a difference of opinion between him-
self and any of his colleagues. As that he did tell me of any importance I telegraphed to the
paper, and it was the information that he ceased to be a director when the new company was
formed.