

Clark's Letters to Edward Ivey

It is at C4/C 218. The 'Ted' of this letter is Edward Ivey, a close friend of Clark's from the 1870s and, as numerous 1870s and 1880s letters from W T Gill and Joseph G Witton to Clark, in the Clark Papers, make clear, Ivey was an active member of the Minerva Club. [Link to the MC] Ivey, a grocer, was active in Hobart mercantile life. A degree of defensiveness shown by Clark in this letter implies that Ivey, to whom Clark clearly seeks to justify himself, was a democrat in some emphatic sense. Other letters from Ivey to Clark in the Clark Papers (C4/C215-17) confirm close personal friendship and some kind of link between Ivey and the Clark family. Clark's sensitivity as to his democratic credentials is also evident in his 1890s essay 'Why I am a Democrat'. [Link to this]

The letters offer a rare glimpse in the Clark papers of the complex hurly-burly, implied 'understandings', and practical give-and-take of the underside of Tasmanian politics. Other references to these dimensions, in the Clark Papers, are to be found in letters to Clark immediately following his indignant resignation, on an issue of 'principle', from the ministry of Edward Braddon in late 1897.

31 March 1891

My dear Ted,

I duly received your letter to me of the 25th not having previously received the telegram from you and Evans. I have also received a letter from Evans and am pleased to hear that election matters are proceeding as satisfactorily as stated by him and you. I cannot understand why the Trades and Labour Council should have any difficulty in selecting Miles and myself as their candidates although we ran separately. It might happen at any time that four or five candidates of exactly the same political principles would be running for two seats and any organisation such as the Trades and Labour Council could select any two of them and make a ticket of them although the whole four or five were running quite separately from one another. I would like you to make a special point of seeing Bob Taylor and disabusing his mind of any impression that I ever wished to run with Dobson in preference to Miles. Bob is an old friend of mine and he worked vigorously for me at the last general election and I feel grieved to think that he could believe that I ever wavered in my adherence to the democratic party or desired to ally myself with a plutocrat who believes in the division of society into the "upper", "middle" and "lower" classes on the basis of property and money. My only object in running separately is to avoid unnecessarily alienating electors who are prepared to vote for Dobson and myself or Giblin [sic] and myself and also to avoid creating any impression that I or the Ministry have made any compact with Miles to help him and Reynolds in the matter of their contract for the construction of the Mount Zeehan Railway. I was also placed in a delicate position by Dobson coming voluntarily to me and telling me that he intended to go into parliament to sit behind me and to support my colleagues and myself. In the face of a voluntary announcement of that character from him I felt that I was bound so far as my public, the same day that I sent my last telegram to you I wrote to Evans and told him that I was astonished to learn that he confirmed Miles' statement about my consent to hold joint meetings and I reminded him that I distinctly told Miles and Cuthbert at my house that as a Minister I would be compelled to open the campaign at the Town Hall without association with any other candidate and defend the conduct of the ministry during the last four years and give an indication of our intentions in the future. I am not at all sure that Miles would defend all our legislation and all our ministerial acts, and it would be ridiculous to have a candidate on the platform with me condemning some of the actions of myself and my colleagues. I will leave you to do whatever you think best for me, but I would like to run alone so far as public announcements are concerned.

I am

Yours Faithfully

A. Inglis Clark

3 November 1899

My dear Chief Justice,

It is now nearly two months since I received an American newspaper containing an announcement of your appointment to the office of Chief Justice of Massachusetts. Since then I have been twice on circuit and have been compelled to postpone all my private correspondence until I found myself settled at home again for a few weeks, otherwise I should have sent my congratulations to you by an earlier mail.

I have not anything new in my own life to tell you. I often wish that you were much nearer to me than you are so that I might discuss a point of law with you. A short time ago I differed from my colleagues on a question relating to the distribution of the assets of a deceased insolvent who left personal property in several colonies in which there was a conflict of laws. I found several American decisions in support of my opinion but we could not discover any English authority directly on the point.

If at any time you deliver a judgement on a point of common law in which you think I would be interested I shall be pleased to receive a copy of it if it is reported in a form convenient for transmission by post.

My wife wishes me to convey to you her congratulations and we both desire you to convey out kind remembrances to Mrs Holmes.

I am

Your Sincerely

A. Inglis Clark

26 October 1901

My dear Chief Justice,

I have postponed the writing of this reply to your last letter to me until I had a copy of my book to send to you. The publication of it was delayed by various causes for a period of three months beyond the date at which I expected it to appear. But I am pleased to be able to say that the wearisome [sic] work of correcting proof sheets and compiling index etc has come to an end, and I am sending a copy of the book to you with this letter.

The Federal Judiciary Bill has not yet been introduced into the Federal Parliament. On that I have nothing to report to you about the Federal Bench. There are abundant indications of work for the High Court as soon as the Judges are appointed.

The people of Australia were all greatly horrified [sic] to hear of the assassination of President McKinley and they hope that the American people will take effective steps to put down the propaganda of anarchism.

I suppose that you had a good time in England. I often wish that Australia was as near to California as Massachusetts is to England. I should then see Boston every three or four years, and would probably be preparing now for a journey there early next year. But I must bow to the geographical configuration of the earth and all its consequences and must wait in patience until my time to cross the Pacific Ocean again arrives. My wife sends her kindest remembrances to Mrs Holmes and yourself.

I am

Ever Sincerely Yours

A. Inglis Clark