Could not some one make some enquiry, privately or otherwise, about the present stage of the investigation about Matyana's affair? — without expense to me.

Bishop Colenso
Bishopstowe
Natal
Feb. 23. 1875

C131/86

My dear Mr Chesson

Let me first mention that my daughter has sent a collection of cuttings &c, from the Natal Papers of the last month, to my sons (R. J. and F. E. Colenso, 50 Fleet Street), with instructions that they are to go the round of my friends in England — viz. especially —

(1) My boys & their uncle (Mr Bunyon) &c.

(2) Messrs Shaen, Chesson, &c.

(3) Rev. Messrs Jones, Hansard, Ross, &c —

the first being my family group, the second my lay ~~[illegible]~~ do, & the third my clerical group, of friends of the cause. I hope that you will enquire for these papers, if they do not reach you, & that you will not forget my sons, who can give you any amount of information about the Colony.

I had a very pleasant voyage to the Cape, & thence to Natal. And it was well I left England when I did on the

25th of Decr: for the following Steamer, the Celt, which started on Jan. 5, has been totally wrecked between the Cape and Algoa Bay, & though the passengers & crew & mails escaped, & some personal luggage was saved, the weather & sea being remarkably quiet at the time, yet the affair has been a bad one, & all uninsured goods are lost.

I saw Langalibalele & his son at Robben Island, & I hope that you will have seen my account of the interview which I sent to my sons. If not, please ask to see it — [as also my daughter's journal which goes home by this Mail, & is meant also to go the round of my friends.] I was very fortunate in getting taken on quickly from Capetown, so that Mrs Shepstone, who left Dartmouth on Dec. 23, & left Capetown two days before I did, reached the anchorage at Durban a few hours after our arrival during the night of Jan. 27. In the morning I landed, & found that the Dunbaniles had been in a furious state of excitement, threatening all sorts of indignities against me.

Lord Carnarvon's 3 Despatches, all dated the same day, Dec. 3, & properly numbered, had just been published by Sir B. Pine, but in such an order as to excite to the utmost the popular feeling against Lord Carnarvon, as well as myself; that is, he did not follow the order indicated by Lord Carnarvon's numbering – viz.

136. The release of Langalibalele –
137. The changes intended in the Native Policy –
138. The recall of Sir B.P. –

~~but he~~ and publish them all at once, as evidently intended, but he published first 138 (the recall) on Jan. 19, then 136 (the release) two days afterwards on Jan. 21, & when he had thus continued to inflame the passions of the people to red-hot heat, at the idea of their noble Gov. being recalled & that detestable rebel being released, through the secret machinations of that traitor Lo Colenso, — five days afterwards on Jan. 26 he published the Despatch on Native Policy, which immediately began to exercise a soothing influence upon the people, being the very thing they have so long desired. But all the craft

of Sir B. P. & his advisers! The Gazette is published on Tuesdays in Maritzburg, & only reaches Durban on Tuesday Evening, & would be hardly known in the town till Wednesday Morning. The fact of his recall had leaked out, or must have been let out as soon as Dr Shepstone reached Natal with the Despatches on Jan. 15. And on Jan. 19 they held an "Indignation Meeting" at Durban, being privately supplied with 138 & 136, of which 138 ~~was~~ only was in the Gazette of that same day, which reached Durban that evening — but they were not supplied with 137. So the Maritzburg Indignation Meeting was held when 138 & 136 were both Gazetted, ~~when~~ while 137 was still carefully suppressed. The consequence was that Sir B. got all sorts of sympathetic & complimentary addresses poured in upon him, & "D Colenso", of course, got all manner of abuse. I don't suppose that if those addresses are forwarded to L.C. he will think much the better of Sir B. P., especially when he knows (& I have let Mr Herbert know) the trickery by which

they have been obtained. It was that Despatch on Native Policy on which Lord C. especially relied as a sort of ~~[illegible]~~ heating medicine to relieve the pain which he knew would be caused by the release of Langalibalele & the general censure passed on the proceedings against him, which the whole Colony almost – "dogs of all denom^ns" included – had been so eager in their ignorance to applaud & support. And the publication at last of that Desp. had at once the calming effect which he expected. Fortunately for me the Gazette containing it reached Durban on Tuesday evg, about 24 hours before the Basuto with the "traitor" anchored in the outer Bay. Up to that time the denunciations of wrath against me had been furious: threats of violence were used. I was not to be allowed to land or, if I was, to be insulted on landing: & even on the Thursday morning, when I did land, my warm friend at Durban, D Hyde, sent out a note to me by two other friends (Mr Brooks & Col Dumford) to advise me to land privately, as the feeling of the colonists was so strong, & he wd send his carriage to drive me,

~~had~~ immediately on landing to his house. That same morning also the Natal Mercury published a letter from D. Taylor, an old Colonist & man of some position in Durban, denouncing me in the strongest terms, & recommending that all should wear mourning, that the shops should be closed, & I should be "sent to Coventry" & all who had any intercourse with me. But the last Despatch had quietly done its work, as has certainly been the case since, all the local journals accepting it with approval, & only wanting to know more of the details of the future Policy. And I believe that the discussions which took place that Wednesday in Durban, with the Despatch in hand, had already tended to reduce the temperature: & probably an unwillingness to proceed to extremities when the moment arrived for action, by the sudden appearance of the Basuto some days before she was expected, may have tended to the same result. I ~~landed~~ landed on a splendid morning, was driven up to town (1¼ mile) to Mr Lyle's, without

receiving any insult, but on the contrary meeting several friendly greetings from various acquaintances. Dr Taylor went about with a yard of crape behind his hat: some nine shops ~~were~~ had their shutters up for a little while; & a petty innkeeper on ~~the~~ my way to Brantingham two days afterwards — the same who was fined £5 for spitting in the face of Langa. when he was taken down to Durham "heavily ironed" — had two little black flags flying as I passed: — & those are all the insults I received, except the incessant abuse in the newspapers, of which you will see something in the cuttings sent to England. John Robinson in the Mercury — the henchman & toadie of Sir B. Pine — has done his very utmost to excite the popular feeling against me, as you will see by his articles. And do not let him take credit with you for having kept back the people He did nothing of the kind, anymore than Bp. Elliott when he advised the country people not to pitch Dr Cash & Co into the horsepond. Sir B. P. evidently put his copy of my Blue-Book, sent out by Lord Carnarvon, into J. R's hands, & you will

see what he says of it, utterly misleading the judgment of his readers, as to my having "maligned the Colonists", & observed a "force of secrecy", &c. The secrecy leaders are all this & so are half those in the Times – & they all exhibit the same character, which corresponds precisely with what I told you about him in England. Of course, my opponents in Church matters have made use of the opportunity to try to swell the clamour against me – I do not mean Bp. Maurice & Dean Green but some of their followers and some noisy members of my own flock. And a combination of political & theological partizans has succeeded in expunging my name from the list of Honorary Members of the Dunbar Club. The votes were 22 for the proposition, & 19 against: & for the present the Committee has ruled that the resolution ~~has~~ must take effect. But, as one of their rules requires ~~that~~ for any alteration of their ~~rules~~ laws a majority of three-fourths of those present, ~~must it~~ & the Committee of the Haddingtonshire Club, which exchanges courtesies with

the Members of the Durban Club, will object, I believe, to the decision, since 57 (instead of 23) should have voted for the change in question, I think it probable that it will be overruled. But you see that the violence of the storm has already abated: and, though I am still told that many, who have hitherto been my strong supporters in Church matters, will now refuse their subscriptions, &c. I hope that this too will end to a great extent in talk merely, though no doubt I shall lose some pound in the Colony, more especially as, for want of copies of my Blue Book, I am not able to circulate it sufficiently to refute Sir Robinson's falsehoods. If there are any left in your hands, please send me out some more, e.g. one or two dozen.

Mr Shepstone was delayed at Durban, & did not reach Maritzburg till some days after my own arrival. I said him as soon as I could, & pointed out that L. Carnarvon's Despatch about giving food to Umhlaba's family & allowing the two younger sons, Mazwi & Sigeju, to live at Bishopstowe, had not been obeyed - & further that in direct disregard of his Despatch of June 12, two friends, e.g. the Westlakes.

(reported in his Despatch relating to) Sir B.D.
on Oct. 15 (when he had that Desp. in his hands)
had "assigned" to "farmers" & others not living in towns
a number of prisoners (let out of
gaol, chiefly because they were suffering
dreadfully from a serious disease contracted
in the gaol (beginning with erysipelas, accompanied
with general rheumatic symptoms, and apparently
tending to elephantiasis, as the medical
men have stated) of which many in fact died, &
many are still ailing. Of course, the families
were "assigned" with the men on certain
conditions, & supplied a nice amount of
"labour"; & this fact, with that
of his calling out 2000 hands to get
in the sugar crop, added, of course, to the
satisfaction of the white colonists under
the rule of Sir B. Mr Shepstone tells me that
his locum-tenens, Mr John, had positively
assured him that when he went for Mavivi &
Sigepu, they told him that they did not wish
to live at Bishopstowe. I requested him to
send himself for the lads & examine them, &
he did so a day or two afterwards, & found
that the statement was utterly without foundation
in truth. Mr John had charged them simply
with having told some one [meaning of course
my daughter &c] that they were forcibly
prevented from coming to Bishopstowe: &

they replied that they had never done so — that they had never even expressed a wish to do there, knowing that they dared not think of leaving the place where the Govt. had put them, for fear of being sent back again to Jail." And this reply Mr John twisted into the falsehood aforesaid, without going on to ask them kindly if they wd like to go to B. They told Mr S. that they very much wished to go to B., especially as they knew that their father desired it: he gave them leave at once, & they came as soon as possible, reaching this on Feb. 12, with two other young boys, & two companions — & they have ever since been hard at work in learning to read & write. It really makes one's heart to sink to think that under British rule two such mere boys as these — good little fellows as possible — could have been sentenced to six months' "imprisonment with hard labour", which they actually went through, — at least, the imprisonment, but I don't know what amount of "labour" they had to do. [Yes! I find, that they were kept hard at work in brick-making!] Up to this moment nothing has been done about Umalabad food, which I am still supplying: but no doubt this will be set right in the end by Mr Shepstone, with whom — in public matters — my friendly relations are, I hope, reestablished. And this very Day (Feb. 23) I am happy to say the Gazette contains a Proclamation cancelling

all the assignments throughout the Colony, both of prisoners & others of the two tribes, "Her Majesty's Gov." having signified their disapproval of the assignment to private persons of these prisoners or of other members of the late Amahlubi or Amangwe tribes" — "& all restrictions specially placed upon these people in consequence of their conduct as a tribe, to which other native subjects of this Gov, are not liable, are hereby removed" — Provided, however, that the members of the late Amahlubi tribe shall not be allowed to collect & form themselves into a separate & distinct tribe in any part of this Colony." Now is the time for me to try & get them to labour with the view of buying lands — according to my plan — & the cons are coming to me the day after tomorrow to talk out the subject. Surely Sir B.P. ought to be punished in some way for thrice disregarding the ~~Dec~~ instructions of the Sec. of State — (1) in respect of the transportation — (2) in respect of the "assigning" — (3) in respect of the Resp. about Umhlaba &c. I have not yet received the copy of Mr Solon's account of Matyana's affair, which was to be sent to me as soon as he expected his consent to be pledged by Lord C. in the matter. I very much doubt if he will forward any such consent: he will probably do nothing, in hope that the whole affair will drop. But he is totally unfit to be a Resident Magistrate, much less Acting Sec. for Native Affairs.

I think that my boys & Mr & Mrs & Miss Shaw would like to see this letter, as I cannot write to them — & perhaps

I yesterday saw Khalekwa, the native whose statement, as reported by another native, you will find on the last page of the little pink pamphlet w^h I sent you by last mail. He repeated to me the same story substantially, but with the important additional fact that the messengers, when questioned by Mr Shepstone, told him that his brother had taken a fire-arm from under a skin at his feet & fired at Matyana, but missed him & hit another man! And Mr S. told me that he had never heard of this!! I am utterly astounded with this revelation. The native who told me this cannot possibly have any reason for reporting falsely: he has nothing whatever to do with Matyana or Langa, & ran every chance of being sent to the Zouk, if he was proved to be lying, as he might be, if really false, by producing the 3 messengers.

Bishop of Natal

July 22nd 1875

Re C131/84c, see the note at C131/87a.
84c is not connected with C131/84