

J. W. McKim ^{C 123/94}
Aug. 2^d 1878



Putnam Aug 12/78

My dear Sir

Amidst a busy session I have
but a few moments to spare for cor-
respondence. I thought however it would
both interest & amuse you to see what
penally a would-be reformer of Native
laws he has to pay in this Colony. - I
enclose an extract copied from the "Native
Witness" on which I will just explain.

Dr Colenso rec^d - from you a letter containing
a postscript requesting him to let me see it.
This he did. His son also divulged the
fact which came to the ears of young Shepstone
& the Editor. I don't think the Colenzos have
served me fairly in not stating in the Press
the whole truth & which I asked them to
do, especially as it is reported that the
publicly given

by them to the disclosure of the postscript
was intended to identify me with their
views.

It has been my experience to be somewhat
popular here & you will recollect how young
Shepstone failed to head the poll against me.
The Bishop since his unfortunate attack
on the Colonists is positively hated. To
connect me with him ~~therefore~~ & cause
the public to believe it, is therefore the
heaviest blow that can be struck at the
confidence hitherto subsisting between my con-
-stituents & myself. — There is not the
least doubt in my own mind that young
Shepstone, my Colleague, is privily using the
Editor of the Witness, to drive me, who am
almost the only man left of the little band
which has opposed the Shepstonian policy,
from public life. The article I enclose
is a fair representation of the general views
of Natalians respecting you society & so I
suppose every man who is known to have
a correspondence therein will be proscribed
& banished if possible. I have always told
you & now repeat, that so long as the Shepstonian
power continues here, neither I or any other man
will be able to effect reforms

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The *Witness* this morning has an editorial on Mr. Akerman, in which it asks:—"Why does he not plead for the difficulties of the Secretary of State when such a question as that of native marriages is under discussion, or when the question of Home Defence is to the fore? Why should this pleader on behalf of Colonial Ministers talk at other times of the "rule of Downing-street," as though the name of that locality were a synonym for the infernal regions? And why, seeing that on the 19th of July he is so eager to defend his friend the "noble Earl," did he, in the *Times of Natal* for the 1st of March last, publish, or cause to be published, a "communicated" attack on the noble Earl, in which he charged him with the basest political treachery? These are questions which Mr. Akerman will no doubt be able to answer satisfactorily to himself. Another question which he will no doubt be able to answer satisfactorily to himself is this—Has he, or has he not, allowed himself, independently of the interests and wishes of his constituents, to become the faithful servant of the Aborigines' Protection Society? We do not ask this question without reason. Not only is there the evidence of Mr. Akerman's own pamphlets and published letters to go by, but there is a report afloat, and we believe a report not without foundation, that through the medium of the Aborigines' Protection Society, an alliance has been established between the senior member for the City and the Bishopstowe interest. It is rumored that, by the last mail from England, the Bishop of Natal received a letter from Mr. Chesson, the Secretary of the Aborigines' Protection Society, containing certain important assurances with regard to the Zulu question; that this letter was shown first of all, before all other privileged persons, to Mr. Akerman, and that it is now in his possession. Assuming this rumour to be correct—and we have good reason to believe that it is—the further question will be asked—Is the unexpected attitude of Mr. Akerman with regard to the vote discussed on Friday last to be accounted for by his newly formed alliance with Bishopstowe? Of course, as a private person, Mr. Akerman has a right to do whatever he pleases. But as a public person, and as the representative of a constituency which has always regarded him as a champion of popular rights in the Colony, his position, unless the report we have referred to can be explained or contradicted, is very seriously compromised. If it should be asked what possible notice could induce the senior member for the City to enter into an alliance with Bishopstowe, the answer is easy to be found.

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With regard to the Editor I must now explain. He is a newly imported one - Reginald Statham. For some months after his arrival we were very friendly but it was my misfortune to offend him in a piece which no paper can appear in any Journal which he supposes to be mine but a personal attack on me follows in the "Witness". Such the case with the one alluded to about Carnarvon. It was anonymous & appeared in the Times of Natal. During the whole session my presence in the Council has either been ignored, or I have been made the victim of the grossest personal attacks. This last is the severest cut of all. - He has no authority whatever for asserting that I wrote my anonymous paper. Well the Stephensons are of course fully aware of the antipathy and as young Stephenson is continually seen in his company I consider I am not wrong in the belief that Statham is being used to destroy me politically. What the article means by the Bishopstons intent I know not. But it is intended to imply that Messrs Aherman Colenzo, Chesson & the Aborigines Protection Society are leagued in an alliance (or conspiracy) to destroy Natal's popular rights of which Mr Aherman had been thought to be the champion.

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The pamphlet he alludes to as one proof
of the conspiracy happens to be the one that
he himself favourably reviewed, but before we
had our difference. The immediate occasion
prompting the Article was this. Relatives of
Likhgabalala (58 women & children) have been
supported by Govt for some time until they
could be located. For two years the L. Council
has voted the money without informing the
Governor that they would vote no more. A
supplementary vote came down for money ^{in 1877} spent
£200 / & all at once & spasmodically the
L.C. expunged the item. But believing it to be
a breach of faith I supported the Govt. explaining
how the local Executive were controlled from
home & stating the delicate position of a Secy
of State in Native matters before a jealous
English public as told me by Earl Carnarvon.
This was the reference to the Secy of State so
distorted by the Witness. —

I may add that during the present
session Native Legislation has partially taken
place, but retrogressively & in violation of the
law of 1875. I must not however say any more
or I shall again be branded as a conspirator.

Yours faithfully

F. W. Chesson Esq

John P. A. Hervey