

1873.

NEW ZEALAND.

EXPORTATION OF FUNGUS TO CHINA,

(CORRESPONDENCE RELATIVE TO).

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

No. 1.

Mr. W. SEED to Mr. W. TOWNSEND.

(No. 53.)

SIR,—

Customs Department, Wellington, 4th March, 1872.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 26th ultimo, giving a report on the trade of your port for the year 1871. In that report mention is made of a kind of fungus which forms a new and considerable item in the list of exports. I should be glad if you could furnish me with any additional particulars respecting this article; for instance, the price that is paid for it at Taranaki, the quantity exported, the port to which it is sent for shipment to China, and the uses it is intended for, if these are known.

I have, &c.,

WILLIAM SEED,

Secretary and Inspector.

W. Townsend, Esq., H.M. Customs,
New Plymouth.

No. 2.

Mr. W. TOWNSEND to Mr. W. SEED.

(No. 8.)

SIR,—

Custom House, New Plymouth, 15th March, 1873.

In answer to your letter No. 58, 4th March, 1872, in which you refer to my report on the trade of this port for the year 1871, and request further particulars of the new article of export called "fungus," I have the honor to forward such information as I have been able to collect.

The demand arose here with a Chinese dealer, Mr. Chow Cheng, who advertised for and first purchased the material; the merchants and traders of the place, on inquiry of their correspondents in Sydney and other ports where Chinese merchants are established, finding that the article was in demand in any quantity in China, entered into the trade in competition with Mr. Chow Cheng, and bought of both settlers and Maoris. Further than this very little more is known of it by them as an article of commerce. The price paid for this material in Taranaki has been 2d. to 2½d. the pound, and the quantity exported to this time has been 145 bales, each containing 450 lbs., in all about 65,250 lbs.

The port in China to which it is shipped is not known here; the bulk has been carried coastwise to Dunedin, thence to be shipped to China, probably direct, by the Chinese traders at that port. A portion has been exported to Sydney, where, it is said, it also goes into Chinese hands for shipment to their own country. The use to which it is put is not certainly known here, but it is said by the Chinese buyers to be for dyeing purposes.

To recapitulate: The price paid in Taranaki is about £20 the ton; quantity exported, 145 bales, about 29 tons; the port to China shipped, not known here; uses to which it is put—said to be as a dye.

Though the export is comparatively small at present, in the opinion of those interested in the trade, there is a prospect of a considerable increase next season, and in the future.

I have, &c.,

WILLIAM TOWNSEND,

Officer in Charge.

William Seed, Esq.,
Secretary and Inspector of Customs, Wellington.