

1874.
NEW ZEALAND.

THE VIENNA EXHIBITION,

(PAPERS RELATIVE TO).

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

No. 1.

Sir CHARLES CLIFFORD to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY.

SIR,—

London, 5th June, 1873.

I have had the honor of receiving a letter from you, under date 23rd December, 1872, notifying that the Government of New Zealand had appointed Dr. Featherston and myself Commissioners to represent the Colony at the International Exhibition to be opened at Vienna in May, 1873.

Under date 4th March, 1873, I received a letter from the Colonial Office in Downing Street, stating that I should be regarded as an officially-appointed Commissioner, and in that capacity be duly accredited and introduced to the Austrian authorities. I afterwards received the official appointment, under the seal of the Colony, dated 1st January, 1873.

I have delayed the acknowledgment of these communications, because it was very doubtful whether my engagements would permit of my performing the duties thus imposed upon me. At the last moment, however, finding that Dr. Featherston's health quite disabled him for so long a railway journey, and that not only New Zealand but the Colonies generally would probably be but very thinly represented, I determined to be present at the inauguration.

On my arrival at Vienna, on April 29th, I found the New Zealand Court quite ready to take in the exhibits, and I was informed that most of them had left Trieste by rail on April 24th, but that, owing to the inefficient arrangements of the Austrian railways to meet the increased traffic, they were unlikely to be delivered for some days. I had the honor of explaining this to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, who, as President of the British Royal Commission, took an active interest in all that was done. His Royal Highness was quite satisfied that our unpreparedness was in no way the fault of the Colony.

On May 1st the Exhibition was opened in state by the Emperor and Empress of Austria, attended by a large number of distinguished visitors from every quarter of the world. After taking part in the ceremonies of the occasion, the Commissioners were requested to proceed to their respective courts to meet the Emperor and Empress on their tour of the building. I had the honor of doing so at the entrance of the New Zealand Court; and although there was nothing at that time to arrest attention, I was gratified to find, from the remarks made, that our Colony was exciting much interest. After this, daily additions made the Court more attractive.

Among the earlier arrivals I may mention an admirably arranged collection of the *Phormium tenax*, showing it in every process of manufacture, from the raw leaf into rope and twine of every description; and its other products, from the coarsest sacking to the most perfectly bleached table linen of the finest texture. This was exhibited by Mr. Thorne, and was much noticed. Some fine water-colour drawings of New Zealand coast scenery were also much examined and admired. The specimens of gold, wool, and coal had arrived, and, with the single exception of the Cape of Good Hope, we were far more forward than any other British Colony.

It is only right to say that the appointment of Mr. Phillips Bevan as the agent of the Australian and New Zealand Commission, was a most fortunate one. He has a thorough knowledge of his duties; takes great interest in New Zealand; has shown sound taste and judgment in the arrangement of the exhibits; and is quite competent to explain and display them to the utmost advantage. My duties were thus rendered comparatively light and easy.

As the representative of the Colony of New Zealand, I was honoured by commands to attend dinners given by the Emperor of Austria and the Prince of Wales, and received much hospitality from the Austrian Minister of Commerce and others of the leading men in Vienna. An opportunity, of which I availed myself, was in this way given me of serving the interests of the Colony, by describing its capabilities to some of the most influential men in Europe.