

No. 15.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY, New Zealand, to the COLONIAL SECRETARY, Queensland.

SIR,—

Colonial Secretary's Office, Wellington, N.Z., 6th March, 1875.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letters of the 22nd of June and 14th of November last, upon the subject of a reciprocity of trade between the colonies of Queensland and New Zealand.

Permit me to apologize on behalf of this Government for the delay which has taken place in replying to your first letter, and to assure you that that delay is not to be attributed either to a want of respect towards your Government, or to a want of appreciation on the part of the Government of New Zealand of the importance of the subject.

Your letter of June was referred to the Secretary of Customs for certain returns and other information necessary to a full consideration of the question, and that officer being absent on duty the papers were accidentally misplaced, and were only brought to light on the receipt of your second letter. At that time the Commissioner of Customs happened to be in a distant part of the colony, and the papers were sent after him, but crossed him on his return to the seat of government, and thus did not reach him for some time.

Since then the subject has received that full consideration at the hands of the Cabinet which its political and fiscal importance demands, and I regret to say that the admission of the additional articles—arrowroot and sugar—stipulated for by you would so largely affect the revenue of this colony that for the present it will not be in the power of this Government to conclude a reciprocal treaty with Queensland on the terms proposed.

I make this communication with much regret, and beg you to accept my assurance that it is purely on fiscal grounds that this Government have felt themselves necessitated to arrive at such a decision. We hope, however, that the suspension of negotiations will be merely temporary, and that the time may not be far distant when they may be resumed.

I have, &c.,

W. H. REYNOLDS,

(in the absence of the Colonial Secretary).

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Queensland.

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