

Should, however, the other colonies be of a different opinion, the Colonial Treasurer and Commissioner of Customs think that New Zealand should not stand aloof, but that, on the contrary, she should invite the other colonies to make this colony the scene of the conference. There are reasons, which the other colonies will perhaps not be unprepared to allow, why a neutral ground like New Zealand, sufficiently removed from Australia to be free from the territorial prejudices which affect different Governments on one continent, would be suitable for a meeting of the representatives of all the colonies.

The Colonial Treasurer and Commissioner of Customs, however, do not suggest that a conference should be recommended, but merely that, if it should be deemed expedient to hold one, Wellington should be the place of meeting.

In the meanwhile, it is advised that New Zealand should show itself ready to negotiate with other colonies.

To facilitate such negotiations, the Colonial Treasurer and Commissioner of Customs have considered the articles about which it is desirable to treat. Any two colonies desiring to make arrangements would find it the most convenient course to first agree upon the articles which should become the subject of arrangement: the details of such arrangement would then be arrived at with comparative facility. In the Schedule attached, the Colonial Treasurer and Commissioner of Customs enumerate the articles concerning which they are of opinion it will be desirable to treat. In selecting those articles they have been guided by various considerations, such as—

- (a.) That they are sufficiently important or useful, or likely to become so, to make it desirable that agreements should be entered into about them.
- (b.) That they are not of a nature likely to occasion difficulties by importations of foreign goods being palmed off as native productions.
- (c.) That they are articles which it is so essentially reasonable the colonies should exchange and be dependent upon each other for, that Great Britain and other countries would not be justified in complaining of the arrangements as injurious to their commerce or prejudicial to their interests.

A practice has grown up in one colony, if not more, of supplementing Customs duties by heavy wharf dues. As there would be no advantage in the remission of duties if they could be replaced by other burdens, it should be understood that the arrangements made would concern all charges of a direct nature, whether in the shape of Customs duties or wharf or jetty dues. In respect to the latter it would be easy to agree that they should not exceed a specified rate.

If approved in Executive Council, this memorandum might be forwarded to the Government of each of the other colonies. Some of the articles in the Schedule will not be applicable to the circumstances of all the colonies, but the general nature of the memorandum will sufficiently explain to any colony so situated the necessary inclusion.

SCHEDULE.

GRAIN of all kinds, flour, malt and hops, ale and porter, colonial wines, New Zealand flax, timber, jams, butter, bacon, cheese, fish, fruit.

April 25th, 1874.

JULIUS VOGEL.
WILLIAM H. REYNOLDS.

FORSTER GORING, Clerk to Executive Council.

Approved in Council—JULIUS VOGEL, Presiding.
Approved—JAMES FERGUSON, Governor.

No. 2.

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

SIR,—

Colonial Secretary's Office, Tasmania, 22nd May, 1874.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 6th instant, transmitting a copy of a memorandum on the subject of intercolonial free trade between the Australasian colonies, and in reply I have to inform you that the memorandum will receive the early consideration of this Government.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington, N.Z.

I have, &c.,
THOMAS D. CHAPMAN.

No. 3.

The CHIEF SECRETARY, South Australia, to the COLONIAL SECRETARY, New Zealand.

SIR,—

Chief Secretary's Office, Adelaide, 22nd May, 1874.

I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 6th instant, on the subject of intercolonial reciprocity, and to inform you that the matter will receive early attention.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington, N.Z.

I have, &c.,
J. BOOTHBY,
(for the Chief Secretary).