

No. 4.

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

SIR,—

Colonial Secretary's Office, Tasmania, 25th May, 1874.

With reference to my letter of the 22nd instant, I have now the honor of informing you that the memorandum from your Government on the subject of intercolonial free trade has received the careful consideration of the Executive Government of this colony.

The Government and Parliament of Tasmania have long entertained the opinion that nothing would tend more to promote the welfare of the inhabitants of the Australasian colonies than the free exchange of all articles the growth, produce, or manufacture of the said colonies, and on several occasions during the past ten years this Government has sent delegates to the Conferences that have been held in Melbourne and Sydney to promote that object.

As "The Australian Colonies Duties Act, 1873," authorized the Legislature of Tasmania to make laws with respect to the remission or imposition of duties on any article the produce or manufacture of New Zealand when imported into Tasmania, the Parliament of this colony passed an Act authorizing the Governor of Tasmania, with the advice of the Executive Council, to enter into an agreement with the Governor of New Zealand for the admission into the ports of Tasmania of all or any articles (except spirits and tobacco) the produce or manufacture of New Zealand, free from Customs duties, wharfage, or other charges; provided that the Governor of New Zealand would at the same time enter into an agreement to admit into the ports of New Zealand the products and manufactures of Tasmania, or some of them (except spirits and tobacco), free from all Customs duties, wharfage, and other charges, and further that such agreements might be made for a period of five years.

I transmit herewith six copies of that Act for the information of your Government.

Acting, therefore, under the authority of the Intercolonial Customs Duties Act of this colony, the Governor of Tasmania will be prepared to enter into an agreement with the Governor of New Zealand (for a period of five years) for the admission into the ports of Tasmania, free from all Customs duties, wharfage, and other charges, of the following articles of the growth, produce, or manufacture of New Zealand, viz.,—Grain of all kinds, flour, malt, hops, ale and porter, jams, fruit, butter, cheese, bacon, fish, flax, and timber of all kinds, either cut, sawn, split, or in logs; provided that the Governor of New Zealand will at the same time enter into an agreement with the Governor of Tasmania for the like articles, of the growth, produce, or manufacture of Tasmania, being admitted into the ports of New Zealand free from all Customs duties, wharfage, and other charges.

As it is desirable that no unnecessary delay should take place in carrying out what I understand to be the views of the Government of New Zealand and the Government of Tasmania, I venture to suggest that articles of agreement should immediately be prepared by the Law Officers of your Government, and, when ready, transmitted to this Government for the approval of the Law Officers of this colony, and, when finally settled by those officers, the agreements could be submitted for execution by the Governors of the respective colonies, and exchanged in due course.

By following the plan I have suggested, we might see free trade established between Tasmania and New Zealand within two or three months from this date; and I have no doubt that before many months are passed, we should find some of the neighbouring colonies willing to enter into similar agreements with us for the free exchange of their products and manufactures.

Trusting I shall be favoured with an early reply to this communication,

I have, &c.,

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

THOS. D. CHAPMAN.

Enclosure in No. 4.

AN ACT to amend the Law with respect to Customs Duties on Intercolonial Products and Manufactures.

31st October, 1873.

WHEREAS it is expedient to amend the law relating to Customs duties on intercolonial products and manufactures:

Be it therefore enacted by His Excellency the Governor of Tasmania, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Council and House of Assembly, in Parliament assembled, as follows:—

1. The Governor, by and with the advice of the Executive Council, may enter into an agreement with the Governors of the Colonies of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia, Queensland, and New Zealand, or with any of them, for the admission into Tasmania of all or any articles (except spirits and tobacco) the produce or manufacture of the said colonies, or of any of them, free from Customs duties, wharfage, or other charges, or at such reduced Customs duties, wharfage, and charges as the Governor in Council thinks fit: Provided that every colony with whose Governor such agreement is entered into agrees to admit the products and manufactures of Tasmania or some of them (except spirits and tobacco) either free from all Customs duties, wharfage, and other charges, or at such reduced Customs duties, wharfage, and other charges as may be agreed upon.

2. Any such agreement may be entered into for a period not exceeding five years, and may at any time during the said period be altered or rescinded by the Governor in Council with the consent of the Governor of every colony who is a party to such agreement, but not otherwise; and every alteration or rescission of any such agreement shall be made known by Proclamation to be published in the *Gazette*.

3. Every agreement entered into under this Act shall be published in the *Gazette*, and laid before both Houses of Parliament as soon as may be after the making thereof, and shall remain in force for the period named therein, unless Parliament within one year after the same shall be so laid before Parliament annuls the same.