

SESS. II.—1879.  
NEW ZEALAND.

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# ESTABLISHMENT OF A GUNPOWDER FACTORY IN NEW ZEALAND

(CORRESPONDENCE RELATIVE TO THE).

*Laid upon the Table by the Hon. Mr. Hall, with the leave of the House.*

## No. 1.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY.

7, Westminster Chambers, Victoria Street, Westminster, S.W.,  
29th March, 1877.

SIR,—

I have the honor to forward a copy of a letter I have received from Messrs. John and Edward Hall, and of my reply thereto, and also by book post a copy of the War Office Handbook of the Manufacture and Proof of Gunpowder, by Captain Smith, R.A.

2. I think you will consider Messrs. Hall's letter of great interest. All the precautions that can be taken cannot divest of a large amount of danger the carriage of gunpowder. I find that from Great Britain 22,473 lb. of gunpowder, 323,855 lb. of blasting powder, and 1,022,638 cartridges were exported to New Zealand during the year 1875; besides that, considerable quantities of each denomination were sent from Australia. When it is remembered that the large quantity I have mentioned was divided amongst the ships sailing from here to New Zealand, it is scarcely possible to avoid thinking that they ran considerable danger. In many cases the powder in casks was mixed up with other cargo, and in one especially some of the barrels broke, and the powder was shaken about all over the hold, which contained amongst other things railway iron. One spark caused by the friction of the iron might have blown the vessel and its contents to atoms.

I append copy of a paper circulated by the Australian and New Zealand Underwriters' Association, containing extracts from the *Otago Daily Times*, and the captain's account of the shipment which I have just described. It is said that the precautions now adopted under recent legislation in this country are too stringent to permit of such improper loading again taking place. I doubt, however, if any legislative provision can do more than somewhat lessen the danger of the carriage of gunpowder.

3. If you desire me to do so, I will make inquiries into the whole subject, including the cost of an arsenal, whether a private firm could be induced to establish one and on what terms, the plan employed in India, &c.

I have, &c.,

JULIUS VOGEL,  
Agent-General.

5th April, 1877.

P.S.—In the *Times* of this day there appears a very able and fully-informed letter on the risks of transporting gunpowder by sea, to which I think it well to direct your attention. I append a copy.

## Enclosure 1 in No. 1.

### FLOATING POWDER BARRELS.

SIR,—

St. John's Wood, 4th April, 1877.

While Parliament was sitting I refrained from asking you to allow me again to encroach upon your valuable space to expose further the monstrous manner in which gunpowder and other explosives are stowed in sea-going vessels, and to show the utter insufficiency of the law to check such reckless practices. But now I have again to ask you, in the interests of humanity, to insert this letter.

The perverseness of the Board of Trade upon this subject is so extraordinary that I think it will hardly be time and space wasted if I recapitulate the various answers of Sir C. Adderley to questions put to him in the House of Commons during the last six weeks by different members upon this subject.