

1881.
NEW ZEALAND.

TRADE WITH FRANCE IN NEW ZEALAND TIMBERS

(CORRESPONDENCE RELATIVE TO THE PROPOSED ESTABLISHMENT OF).

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

No. 1.

Mr. A. LECOY to the Hon. the MINISTER of LANDS.

SIR,—

Wellington, 14th May, 1881

I beg to enclose the petition I mentioned to you the other day. Some of the arguments advanced by the petitioners may be found worthy of notice. They wished me to go to Paris for the purposes referred to in the petition. I objected to an immediate execution, from two motives: I wished to see forest affairs here a little farther advanced as regards statistics, preparatory organization, &c.; also I wished the petitioners to form among themselves a regular and substantial association, which, however, I understand is now in course of completion.

I intend to call upon Mr. McKerrow early next week to see the new forest-maps. These are, no doubt, a good illustration of the previous statements of the department in respect of forest areas. The question is now how to turn to profit these immense possessions.

Your suggestion to the effect that a preparatory survey of those forests be made, comprehensive of technical and commercial estimates, points out the very first steps to be taken in the matter. This preliminary survey could not, however, be made in less than six months.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Minister of Lands.

A. LECOY.

Enclosure in No. 1.

WE, the undersigned proprietors of timber-lands, saw-millers, and timber-merchants, resident in the Provincial District of Wellington, and connected with the timber interest in other parts of the colony, desire to bring under your notice the following facts:—(1.) That the timber industry in New Zealand is at the present moment suffering from an absolute stagnation in trade, arising, unquestionably, from the fact that the requirements of the colony in the matter of the consumption of timber are comparatively small when compared with the large area of timber-lands now being worked. (2.) That the great importance to the colony of its native timbers as an article of export has never yet been sufficiently recognized, notwithstanding the fact that the experiments of the late Mr. Balfour, C.E., and the more recent data obtained by Mr. Blair, C.E., have proved that very many of the New Zealand timbers are stronger and more durable than European and American oak, which are taken as the standard woods in the European timber markets. (3.) That it has come to our knowledge that the supply of oak and other hard woods in Europe has become very limited, and is certain to become more so every year, the result being that a constant increase in the value of such timber is taking place: in fact, the price of that particular class of wood has doubled during the last twenty-five years. (4.) That our practical experience has led us to believe that many of our New Zealand timbers would, if properly introduced into the European market, be eagerly sought for by manufacturers in place of oak and other hard woods, the experiments we have referred to having shown that our native timber would satisfy all their requirements as to strength and appearance, while they would be purchasable at a price which, while satisfactory to the buyer, would leave a fair margin of profit to the exporter. (5.) That, notwithstanding their excellent quality and cheapness, great difficulty exists in getting our native timbers properly introduced into foreign markets, in consequence of the ignorance of buyers upon the subject; which can, in our opinion, be obviated by the Government taking active steps in bring-