

refunded, I am commanded by my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to forward herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, a copy of a letter of the 8th March from Rear-Admiral Tryon, recommending that these guns should be presented to New Zealand.

2. The Secretary of State will note that the desire of the Colonial Government to retain these guns, now reported by Admiral Tryon, appears to be at variance with their wishes as expressed in the New Zealand Ministry's memorandum of the 14th July (enclosure to Colonial Office letter of the 31st August). My Lords, however, presume that the colonial authorities, though averse to expending a considerable sum in the purchase of guns of the 64-pounder type, would gladly retain these eight if presented by the Imperial Government.

3. I am to state that the guns could probably be given up without interfering with the requirements of the navy, and that my Lords are disposed to entertain Admiral Tryon's proposal, for the reasons detailed in paragraph 6 of his letter.

4. Should the War Department concur in this present, my Lords would cause application to be made to the Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury for the necessary sanction; but, as a first step, they would be glad to be favoured with any observations that Lord Granville may think fit to offer on the matter, especially as the wishes of the New Zealand Government were in the former case conveyed to this department through the Colonial Office.

5. I am, in conclusion, to add that my Lords would not view this present, if made, as establishing a precedent for similar gifts in the future.

The Under-Secretary of State, Colonial Office, S.W.

I have, &c.,

EVAN MACGREGOR.

*Recommending that the 64-pounder Guns sent from Sydney to New Zealand be given to that Colony.*

SIR,—

H.M.S. "Nelson," Adelaide, 8th March, 1886.

Be pleased to inform their Lordships that in April, 1885, New Zealand possessed no harbour provided against a naval attack, and her resources at the time were very small.

2. On the Government of the hour fell the task of providing the defences which were demanded by the colony; and very considerable progress has been made, and large orders for warlike material, to the value of £166,500, have been sent to England.

3. I found, however, no adequate provision had been made against an attack delivered by small vessels, or boats, or for the protection of mine fields. The guns that are designed to deny the harbours are placed in positions that have undoubted advantages in one sense, but are too high to prevent access to the harbour during night by such boats as are carried by vessels of war.

4. The stores ordered by the Government of New Zealand are sufficient for the batteries under construction and to arm local steamboats such as might act as guard-boats; but additional guns are required to protect the mine fields at Auckland and Wellington, and to work in unison with the electric light.

5. The Government of New Zealand have expressed to me their wish to retain the guns (eight 64-pounders) sent from Sydney, and to use them for the purpose above indicated; and His Excellency the Governor has explained that it is hoped that this will not be attended by any cost on account of the guns to the colony.

6. I beg permission to suggest and to strongly recommend that those guns should be given to that colony free of charge, for the undermentioned reasons: (a.) At this time four of the guns are on the top of Mount Victoria, where they were taken up a tramway specially laid for the purpose, and one gun is on the North Head, Auckland; one gun is at Oamaru, 540 miles to the south of Auckland, on the line of rail; and two are at Wellington. The cost of their transport and return to Sydney would be very considerable. (b.) The guns are well suited for the purpose it is intended to use them for. (c.) A safe coal dépôt in New Zealand is a necessity for Her Majesty's ships. (d.) I presume at an early date these guns will be replaced at the dépôt, Sydney, by more modern ones, as they are quite unequal to those to which they would be opposed if used in cruisers. (e.) The guns and works ordered by New Zealand will not be ready or completed for a considerable time, and therefore it is highly improbable that these will be returned to dépôt, Sydney, at an early date if the existing arrangement is maintained. (f.) The Government of New Zealand remitted, or rather abstained from charging the Admiralty account with, £456 7s. 10d. (for hire of hulk and railway expenses, and besides giving the use of their employés) which would have been charged had they not willingly undertaken the charge of coal stored in New Zealand for naval purposes in 1885. (g.) New Zealand, by no means the richest colony, has many harbours to defend instead of but few, as is the case with most other colonies, and has already made progress in Lyttelton, Dunedin, Auckland, and Wellington, and has placed a gun to cover the breakwater at Oamaru. (h.) The actual cost of the gift would be small, while the colony would receive an encouragement that would, I am informed by His Excellency the Governor, be very much appreciated. (i.) If an alarm of war recurs within the next few years, if these guns are not mounted for the internal defence of the harbours the Naval Commander-in-Chief on the station will have to send other guns or take other means to secure the safety of a coal dépôt in New Zealand.

7. The above are but some of the reasons which I present to their Lordships requesting favourable consideration. If this is assented to I submit that the guns are given with the understanding that they are mounted for the internal defence of the harbours of Auckland and Wellington, for they are most required in those harbours, and the width and nature of those harbours demand special treatment.

I have, &c.,

G. TRYON,

Rear-Admiral.

The Secretary of the Admiralty.