

1889.
NEW ZEALAND.

NEW ZEALAND COURTS AT PARIS EXHIBITION

(REPORT UPON THE).

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

No. 1.

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

SIR,—

7, Westminster Chambers, London, S.W., 28th June, 1889.

I now beg to send you the first proofs of the catalogue of New Zealand exhibits at the Paris Exhibition. It has not been possible to print it finally in time for this mail, still less to translate it into French; but I need not delay any longer a brief report of what has been done.

There are two Courts, as you are aware, one of them being in the Palace of Industries, at the Champs de Mars, and the other in the Agricultural Galleries at the Quai d'Orsay. The chief exhibits shown in the Industrial Palace are minerals, wool, hemp, kauri-gum, birds, modelled Maori figures, and photographs; in the Agricultural Gallery, cereals and grasses, woods, preserved meats and fish, maps, pictures, and photographs.

The bulk of the auriferous and argentiferous ores are exhibited in the Industrial Palace, in an extensive show-case divided into compartments, containing the quartz and minerals sent by the various mining companies in both Islands; there are also two trophies, comprising antimony, copper, and other ores, and several glass show-cases containing selected specimens placed on glass stands and trays. The various samples and specimens are distinguished by proper descriptive cards, and as none of them are above the line of sight they are all equally capable of being examined by visitors.

A large amount of interest has been manifested in the minerals, and frequent inquiries have been made as to the extent and nature of our mineral resources generally. It is a pity that no specimens of coal were sent, as the coal industry has so greatly increased of late years.

The amount of wool being hardly sufficient for an adequate representation, I asked Messrs. Redfern, Alexander, and Co., and Messrs. Jacomb and Son, to select a number of fleeces in addition, to be resold at the close of the Exhibition. Mr. Seaward (of Messrs. Jacomb, Son, and Co.) was sent over to set out every fleece separately to the best advantage; and he did his work so well that I may safely say (not having done it myself) that the New Zealand wool is the best-shown of any wools in the Exhibition.

With regard to hemp, I asked Messrs. Weddell and Co. and Binnie and Co. to select some of the best sorts, to be added to those sent from the colony. I also obtained through Messrs. Hale and Son, leading brokers, additional samples of gum, showing the varieties in kind and value up to the highest market-price of £15 per cwt.

Sir Robert Herbert, K.C.B., contributed an attractive exhibit of New Zealand birds, and those selected some time ago for Sir James Maitland were also placed in a prominent position in the court.

It will be remembered that two of the models of Maori figures which we exhibited at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition in 1886 were not disposed of: these, with two others, were dressed with mats, spears, &c., of Native manufacture. Sir Walter Buller gave me valuable help in the preparation and dressing of the figures, which at once became the greatest attraction of the court, and are always surrounded by a crowd.

The exhibits of inlaid woods have been much admired, and it is a pity that many more of the same kind were not sent.

I have referred in a previous letter to the trophy representing the amount of gold raised in the colony, which is a prominent feature in the court at the Industrial Palace. The valuable show-cases so kindly lent to me by Sir Philip Cunliffe Owen, a number of which I was able to place at the disposal of the Victorian Commission, give an ornamental appearance to both the New Zealand Courts, besides saving us many hundreds of pounds which must otherwise have been spent.

The New Zealand woods are shown in the Agricultural Gallery, where they have always attracted much notice, especially from country people of the working-classes. In accordance with Sir James Hector's suggestion, the specimens sent Home were all prepared anew, one-half of the surface being left to show the wood in its natural state, and the other half carefully polished.