1907.

NEW ZEALAND.

FIRES ON WOOL-SHIPS

(FURTHER PAPERS IN REFERENCE TO).

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

REPORT.

Magistrate's Court, Wellington, 3rd September, 1907.

SIR— Re *Wool Fires.*

Referring to the correspondence submitted by you to me for a report by the Commissioners, I have the honour, on their behalf, to submit as follows:—

In respect of the bales of wool shipped to London, the Commissioners would explain, in reply to H. C. Cameron's remarks: The wool had been experimented with here, and the object of shipping to London was that those interested in the safe carriage of such cargo should, in addition to the data collected during the course of the experiment, see the condition in which the wool came out of it, and not for the purpose of any continuance of the experiment on the voyage, as it was considered to have expended its inherent capacity for spontaneous combustion.

Mr. R. J. Friswell considers that he was able to gain from examination of these bales points which he had previously held as open to some doubt. As to remarks in his report, "The bales may have been opened and repacked after the experiment," &c., the bales were not so treated. In the first instance two bales of each description were bought, opened, damped, and repacked, and were then dumped together in the usual manner for shipment, were then placed in model hold, and on conclusion of the test were separated only, and one bale opened for inspection; the other was redumped and so shipped. He doubts "if one bale placed in centre of cube of considerable number of bales," &c. The Commissioners would point out that in the case of a fire on board the "Rimutaka" the bales found on fire were immediately below the deck and only a few feet from the hatch, and in the case of the fire at the Islington Wool-store the wool was not even pressed. Further evidence goes to prove that in the stowage of wool, from the round and crinkled surfaces of the bales, air and to some extent ventilation exist nearly all round the dumps.

J. G. Haldane suggests warming before shipment. The Commissioners consider this absolutely impracticable during the pressure of receiving and loading into vessels. To warm a bale through would take days.

Dr. Voelcker "finds little difference," &c. In the process of the experiment the heating of wool would result in the expelling of the moisture, which was found to be the case on the interior walls of the model hold. As to No. 1 of his report, the wool was before damping in a "natural" condition and safe for shipment. As before stated, no further change was expected during the voyage.