

1874.

NEW ZEALAND.

COLONIAL MUSEUM IN LONDON,

(FURTHER PAPERS RELATIVE TO).

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

No. 1.

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

(No. 1264.)

7, Westminster Chambers,

SIR,—

Victoria Street, Westminster, S.W., 1st June, 1874.

Referring to my letter of 1st April (No. 1105), in which I explained fully the steps I had taken, in conjunction with the Agent-General of South Australia, towards taking part in a proposed Australasian Exhibition at South Kensington, and my reasons for ultimately withdrawing from the project, I have now the honor to address you again on the subject, at the instance of the Colonial Office.

The original proposal was to form an Australasian section at the South Kensington Museum, and to place it under the general management of that institution. It was thought that an expenditure of £25,000 would be required for buildings, and a contribution of £1,500 per annum towards the expenses of the establishment; and on the question being referred to the colony, the New Zealand Government decided on not "taking any part at present." Subsequently to this, as reported in my letter of April 1st, I entered into an arrangement of a more simple and less costly character, which in the end proved abortive, and then the whole question was hung up, pending a further reference to the colony. This proposal was to take a portion of the Belgian Annexe at so much per foot, and to contribute *pro rata* to the cost of police, gas, and other general expenses of management. As already explained to the Government, I got alarmed at the threatened cost of a museum, even on this modest scale, and was glad to avail myself of a favourable opportunity of withdrawing from the undertaking.

The project to which I now invite the attention of the Government is of a totally different kind. The Colonial Museum which it is proposed to establish will be started under the auspices of the Imperial Government, and will be under the control of a Committee consisting of Lord Carnarvon, and the Agents-General for the several colonies, with probably Mr. Childers, and a representative of the Crown Colonies to be nominated by the Colonial Office.

The subject has been taken up warmly by Lord Carnarvon, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, who is anxious to make it a success; and the fact that the Annual Exhibition at South Kensington will come to an end this year, seems to offer a very favourable opportunity of securing the necessary site and buildings on very advantageous terms. Indeed, this is the view taken by Lord Carnarvon himself, who happens to be on the Board of Management under whom these Annual Exhibitions have hitherto been held.

With the view of taking part in such an Exhibition as the one now proposed, several of the colonies have already voted sums, amounting in all to a little over £7,000, towards its establishment, and in addition to this have guaranteed annual contributions, amounting in all to £345, towards its maintenance. From a minute by Lord Carnarvon, handed to me confidentially, I hear that it is proposed to establish an Indian Museum on the west side of the Kensington Buildings, and that the space adjoining would be available for a Colonial Museum of the kind indicated. Mr. Robinson, of the Colonial Office, who is in charge of the provisional arrangements, informs me that he has every hope of being able to secure the French Annexe, with its pretty little garden, for a few hundreds a year; and he proposes to invest the required amount in colonial debentures, in the name of trustees, so as to yield a sufficient income per annum to cover all the expenses of maintaining the establishment. New Zealand, if willing to take part in the undertaking, would be asked to contribute a lump sum of £2,000.