

1878.

NEW ZEALAND.

DEFENCE OF THE PORTS OF THE COLONY

(PAPERS RELATING TO THE).

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

No. 1.

Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY to His Excellency the GOVERNOR.

Memorandum for His Excellency.

MINISTERS respectfully inform His Excellency that, in the present menacing condition of affairs in Europe, it is thought desirable to apply to the Imperial Government for twenty-four converted 64-pounder guns, and about 150 rounds of ammunition per gun.

Ministers hope that their application will be favourably considered, and that advantageous terms may be granted by Her Majesty's Government. The guns are required to defend the more exposed harbours of this Colony from bombardment by foreign cruisers or privateers.

It is understood that the guns referred to are not of the latest pattern, though efficient for the purpose. If, therefore, on arrival of the mail, hostilities have commenced, or still appear to be imminent, Ministers are anxious that the guns applied for should be at once sent out to the colony through the Agent-General, who has received instructions relative to their shipment. Should, however, there be no longer a probability of war, they would prefer waiting to obtain information relative to the respective advantages and cost of the present converted 64-pounder guns and those of the improved guns of the same calibre, which it is understood are to be substituted for them throughout the Service.

As it is intended that the guns should be capable of transport to different points of the several harbours, it would be advisable that the gun-carriages should be of a construction that will render it practicable to move them on level ground by adequate horse-power.

Ministers therefore hope that the Secretary of State for the Colonies may be so good as to afford such assistance to this colony in obtaining these arms and ammunition, on favourable terms, as may lie in his power, and to inform the Agent-General of the colony in London what steps on his part are necessary for giving effect to any arrangements that may be made.

G. S. WHITMORE

Wellington, 1st May, 1878.

(In the absence of the Premier).

No. 2.

Hon. the NATIVE MINISTER to Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY.

Hon. Colonel Whitmore, Wellington.

Auckland, 2nd May, 1878.

GOVERNOR received yesterday important message from War Department, *re* Colonial Defence. Several errors in transmission have kept back matter till this afternoon; but following may be relied on as substance of telegram:—*Re* Colonial Defences: Committee of experienced officers have carefully considered question of Colonial Defences. With regard to New Zealand, they report as follows:—Defence of New Zealand by sea, impracticable. Batteries should be erected, at Auckland, on the headlands of Judge's Bay; at Wellington, between Barrett's Reef and Dorset Point; at Lyttelton, between Port and Heads; in Otago, at Harrington Point. Armament required will be eleven 7-ton guns and eleven new or converted 64-pounders. Total cost, £44,000, including guns. The Secretary for War asks if Colony will undertake expenditure, and says that full details are *en route* by mail. Governor suggests that, if Cabinet approve of proposals, Colonel Scratchley might be got over from Victoria to report. Inquire, and you will find in our offices confidential reports on all four ports mentioned in telegram. Important Ministers in Wellington should consider matter, so as to unite with Ministers in Auckland in