

1878.

NEW ZEALAND.

PETITION OF AUCKLAND SHIPOWNERS AND SHIPBUILDERS' ASSOCIATION.

Presented on 2nd August, and ordered to be printed 7th August, 1878.

To the Honorable the Speaker and Members of the House of Representatives,
in Parliament assembled.

THE HUMBLE PETITION OF THE AUCKLAND SHIPOWNERS AND SHIPBUILDERS' ASSOCIATION,
SHOWETH,—

THAT the present system of collecting the light dues and pilotage is both vexatious and oppressive :—vexatious, because it is collected, in almost every instance, every time any vessel enters and clears at any port in the colony : oppressive, because, as will be seen by the returns in that behalf, the sums paid are very heavy, imposing upon shipping (at all times a hazardous and perishing property to hold) the payment of taxes raised for the support of the lighthouse system of the colony and its attendant departmental expenditure, which might, in the opinion of this Association, be fairly apportioned between the general tax-payer and the shipowner, thus drawing a portion of the cost of maintaining lighthouses and of defraying the expenses of the Marine Department from the consolidated revenue, and to that extent relieving the shipowner.

Your petitioners would respectfully suggest that the light dues might be made payable either yearly or half-yearly, at the option of the owner, and at any port in the colony, and that the pilotage system should be assimilated to that of the neighbouring colonies, where shipmasters, possessing a certificate of exemption, are exempt from paying pilotage at the port for which they hold the certificate of exemption, only paying when they take a pilot ; and also that all vessels not exceeding one hundred tons register, engaged in the coasting trade, should be exempted from compulsory pilotage.

Your petitioners would respectfully point out that in the United States of America and in the British North American Colonies no light dues are levied, but that a tax of one penny per ton is paid annually by all the shipping of these countries towards what is called the Hospital Fund. Without going so far as to say that light dues should be done away with in this colony, your petitioners might yet urge that, as a matter of political economy, the maritime interests of this country, destined from its insular position to grow into great importance, should be fostered and encouraged, and that the lowering of these taxes and revision of their mode of collection somewhat in the direction indicated by your petitioners would greatly tend to so beneficial a result.

Your petitioners would also respectfully point out that at the present time foreign vessels are permitted to compete with British and British colonial-owned vessels in the purely coasting trade of the colony ; that this is done through an Act of the General Assembly, specially passed some years back, to enable the large American mail steamers then employed in the San Francisco Mail Service to carry out their contract.

Your petitioners would respectfully point out that, as the mail steamers are no longer engaged in delivering the mails along the coast, this law, in fairness to our own shipping, might be repealed.

Your petitioners would also most respectfully point out that, as the steam coasting service of the colony is now extended to almost all parts of the colony, the law rendering it compulsory for masters of sailing vessels to give twenty-four hours' notice to the Post Office before sailing might be greatly relaxed in the case of sailing vessels trading to those places where there is frequent and regular steam communication.

And your petitioners pray that your honorable House will grant them such relief in the premises as to your honorable House may seem meet.

And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray, &c.

C. HARRIS, Chairman,
(and 40 others.)

