

No. 10.

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

SIR,—

7, Westminster Chambers, London, S.W., 19th May, 1881.

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 21st March, relating to exhibits of New Zealand wool at the approaching Crystal Palace Exhibition.

I have already said to the Government that there were many difficulties in the way of carrying out their wishes, and that it would hardly be worth while attempting it unless it could be done creditably to the colony. Some of these difficulties will have at once suggested themselves to every one familiar with wool-growing; but perhaps the worst was that no good New Zealand wools could be got until the May-June sales, while the Exhibition itself would be opened on the 2nd June, before the sales were over. However, I have done my best to get over the difficulties, and have arranged with some of the largest brokers to buy during the sales the best examples the market can give of the various sorts of wool grown in the colony.

In some quarters I meet with help, in others with apathy and indifference; but I have set people to work who mean to make the thing a success if it can be done, and we shall spare no pains about it. I have already got some bales, and shall soon have all I want, though I may have to buy more than I can use and sell again afterwards, as the best marks are seldom put up in the small lots that would suit our purpose. Most likely I shall have to take a couple of rooms near the Crystal Palace, as, in order to do any good when the wool is ready, I must attend to it for some time early and late.

In the meanwhile I send you reports of the Honorary Council and Palace Superintendent, which were presented to a meeting held at the Mansion House on the 11th instant, the Lord Mayor in the chair. H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught will open the Exhibition, and it is likely to attract a good deal of interest. You will see that some of the great London guilds will give gold medals to be competed for, and that there will be a good representation of the woollen manufacture. When the reports I enclose were read at the Mansion House, I called attention to the stipulation that wool could only be shown by the breeder. This afforded the opportunity for explaining the steps I am taking at your desire, and much satisfaction was expressed at the Government having taken such practical interest in the Exhibition; and I think the other colonies may perhaps wish they had done the same.

The Lord Mayor thanked me for the suggestions I had made, and it was promised that time should be given to me for exhibiting, and that the conditions of the medals should be reconsidered, so as not to exclude your exhibits from competing for the guild prizes.

I have, &c.,

F. D. BELL,

Agent-General.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington.

No. 11.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the Hon. the PREMIER.

SIR,—

7, Westminster Chambers, London, S.W., 28th June, 1881.

In continuation of my letter of the 19th May (No. 399), I have now to inform you of what I have done to carry out your instructions respecting the Wool Exhibition at the Crystal Palace.

I have already mentioned to you that the difficulties in the way of making a good show of New Zealand wools, in the absence of private exhibits, would be obvious to any one acquainted with the wool business. On the other hand, the very circumstance of there not being a number of competitors showing their own produce, offered the opportunity of doing what in one sense perhaps might be even better in the interests of the colony—namely, making a show to represent, more fully than private exhibits could in a commercial point of view, the various kinds of wool which New Zealand produces. This, at any rate, was the object I set myself to accomplish.

It was not worth while, however, to do it at all unless it was done thoroughly. For this purpose I commissioned in the first place a number of the leading wool-brokers to buy during the course of the present wool sales about thirty bales, to be carefully selected by themselves from the best brands. These were to be shown in bulk, the varieties of merino, crossbred, and long wools being labelled in their respective classes of greasy, washed, and scoured fleece. From these bales I then arranged to select the best fleeces, to be shown in glass cases, with labels properly describing the several sorts and their values in the market, and naming the part of the colony from which they came. In this way the Government exhibits, added to the few others which had been sent by private growers on your invitation, were intended to represent as completely as circumstances allowed the character of all the wools grown in the colony.

The work, which has taken a good deal of time and care, is very nearly finished. The bales have all been opened out in a way to show the wool to the best advantage, while the fleeces to be shown under glass have been separately dressed in an attractive manner. I am glad to say the result has been successful, your Government having made a show which is certainly the best of its kind in the Exhibition.

It may, perhaps, be as well that I should say a few words about the Exhibition itself. In the first place, I should again note what is familiar to you, that the Crystal Palace Company made a great mistake in fixing for this Exhibition a date which allowed no time for private growers in any wool-producing country to show their own wools. The absence of so desirable a competition at once spoilt the idea of an "international" show; and, so far as any international display of the raw material is concerned, the Company's scheme was sure from the first to be a failure. Indeed, outside of New Zealand and the Republic of Uruguay (which contributes a very good show of South American wools), the only things worth mentioning as exhibits of fleece are those from Messrs. Fisher and Pitt, of South Australia, a few picked examples from the famous Ereildoune flock of Sir S. Wilson, and some parcels of remarkably fine wool sent from the Melbourne Exhibition. I mention the Republic of Uruguay, because their show is excellent of its kind, and is the only one approaching yours in representative