

1888.
NEW ZEALAND.

CONFERENCE OF THE INDUSTRIAL AND PROTECTION SOCIETIES OF NEW ZEALAND

(REPORT OF THE), HELD IN THE HALL OF THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN THE CITY OF WELLINGTON DURING THE MONTH OF MARCH, 1888, FOR THE PURPOSE OF CONSIDERING A REVISION OF THE TARIFF WITH A VIEW TO ASSISTING COLONIAL INDUSTRIES, AND MATTERS INCIDENTAL THERETO.

Laid on the Table by the Hon. G. Fisher, with the Leave of the House.

THE Conference have to report as follows :—

1. That the following Societies were represented at the Conference by the under-mentioned gentlemen :—

The Industrial Association of Auckland. Delegate : Mr. H. M. Shepherd.

The New Zealand Industrial Protection Association, Wellington. Delegates : Mr. W. Chalmers, Mr. J. Dransfield, Mr. W. Hildreth, Mr. T. Kennedy Macdonald, and the officers of the Association *ex officio*, viz., Mr. C. M. Luke, Mr. W. Hill, Mr. W. Robertson.

The New Zealand Protection Association, Christchurch. Delegate : Mr. David Bellhouse.

The Industrial Association of Canterbury. Delegate : Mr. H. B. Kirk.

The Protection League of Otago. Delegate : Mr. O. J. Hodge.

The Southland Protection League, Invercargill. Delegates : Mr. J. Macintosh, Mr. J. Stuart.

2. That Mr. H. M. Shepherd was elected President, and Mr. J. Dransfield Vice-President of the Conference.

3. That Mr. Bellhouse and Mr. Hill were elected joint Honorary Secretaries of the Conference.

4. That the principle of voting by localities—four votes being allowed to each city or district represented—was the basis upon which all decisions were arrived at.

5. That the Conference sat upon the following days—Monday, 19th March; Tuesday, 20th March; Wednesday, 21st March; Thursday, 22nd March; Friday, 23rd March; Saturday, 24th March; Monday, 26th March; Tuesday, 27th March; Wednesday, 28th March—from 10 a.m. to 5.30 p.m., and on several days from 7.30 p.m. to 10 p.m.

6. This Conference has been called into existence in consequence of the gradual growth of a united opinion that the present tariff gave little encouragement to the development of manufactures within the colony; that, being framed mainly for revenue purposes, it was very unequal in its operations, and in many cases taxed the colonial manufacturers' raw material at the same rate as the imported finished article. It was ascertained that the intense competition amongst manufacturers in Europe and America induced the latter to ship to the colony, from time to time, large quantities of their surplus stocks, thus interfering with the ordinary operations of trade, and greatly embarrassing the colonial manufacturer and diminishing his output.

The effect of these and other like causes was seen in the depression which now exists in many of the manufacturing industries of the colony, and which has led to a diminution of employés and a reduction of wages.

It was also noted that this depression brought about a desire on the part of those who could not obtain employment to seek it elsewhere, until the colony was face to face with an exodus of a number of people to Australia. That this was no fancy is proved by the fact that the excess of departures for the month of February last over arrivals from Australia was no less than 544; and during the present month of March it will be much greater, some 400 having left New Zealand in one week, the worst feature in this connection being the further fact that those who are going comprise not only men with capital, but many of the youngest and most energetic artisans, who can find no opening in New Zealand for their labour.

These facts have been well weighed by the various societies specially associated together for the encouragement and development of colonial industries. They felt that the time had arrived for concerted action and a united expression of opinion upon the fiscal policy, which alike retards