

I may add that a number of the exhibits that were sent from the colony for the Colonial Exhibition of 1886 were, at the close of that exhibition, handed over to the Imperial Institute. But a considerable portion of these were taken back again and shipped through this office to the Melbourne Exhibition. Some of them were then sent back to Paris, in 1889, and there is in store here a number of specimens of timber which came over from Paris, and were retained, presumably, for exhibition at the Imperial Institute. In addition to these there are a number of geological exhibits and specimens of building-stone, coal, and timber, remaining in the possession of the Imperial Institute, out of those that came from the Colonial Exhibition. With regard to other exhibits, such as grain, wool, &c., I assume that special specimens will be from time to time supplied from the colony.

With reference to the recommendation to appoint a general curator to take charge of the whole Australasian Section, I feel disposed not to altogether concur in such an arrangement, unless each colony has a special curator as well, which was not contemplated at the meeting. To give New Zealand the full advantage of its taking part in the Institute, it would, I believe, be expedient that the exhibits displayed in the space allotted should be under the control of some one acquainted with the colony, who would be present to give information to visitors as regards the resources of the colony and the advantages it holds out to suitable colonists.

I will not here comment further on this aspect of the question, as now that Sir Walter Buller is to act with me in the representation of the colony on the Governing Body of the Institute, I prefer to confer with him on the whole matter. I may state, however, that should it be eventually decided to appoint a special curator for New Zealand—as I hope it may be—it seems to me that in the selection of the curator a man might be selected with some aptitude for conducting investigations regarding the industrial products of the colony.

The Institute, containing exhibits and information from all parts of the world, would form a suitable place to collect and compile information regarding the industrial resources of the colony. It is of the greatest importance that the people of the colony should, through the Government, be kept advised of all matters appertaining to the various industrial products of New Zealand, the requirements of the market, the condition in which goods are landed here, the market prices of products, and kindred information; and, the space devoted to each colony being small, it is a question whether special prominence should not be given to the industrial products of the colony.

I have, &c.,

W. B. PERCEVAL.

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

P.S.—Since writing the above I have received a strictly confidential memorandum from Sir F. Abel, giving an outline of the arrangement of the collections, and I enclose two copies of it.

Enclosure 1 in No. 13.

MEETING of a Special Conference held in the Council Chamber of the Imperial Institute on Wednesday, March 30th, 1892, at 3 p.m.

Present, the following members of the Governing Body: Sir Edward Braddon, Agent-General for Tasmania; Sir John Bray, Agent-General for South Australia; Sir Daniel Cooper, representative for New South Wales; Sir James Garrick, Agent-General for Queensland; Mr. Paterson, representative for Victoria; Sir Saul Samuel, Agent-General for New South Wales; Mr. Howard Spensley, representative for Victoria; Mr. Strangways, representative for South Australia.

There were also present, by special invitation: Sir Andrew Clarke, Acting Agent-General for Victoria; Mr. Perceval, Agent-General for New Zealand.

In attendance: Sir Frederick Abel, Secretary; Sir Somers Vine, Assistant Secretary.

Sir Frederick Abel made a general statement with respect to,—

1. The provisional allotment of space to the various Australian Colonies in the Intermediate Gallery, for the purpose of displaying the sample collections.

2. Suggested method of arrangement and custody of collections.

3. The fitting and furnishing of the Australasian Conference-room.

The preliminary allotment of space was generally concurred in, subject to the explanations made in respect of the additional space which could be allotted upon the upper floor, and of the proposal to allot to the several groups of colonies space on the ground-floor of the main building for the classified storage of samples in bulk.

The meeting then considered the question of furnishing and fitting the Australasian Conference-room. An estimate was submitted, showing that an expenditure in round figures of about £1,000 under this head would have to be incurred in decorating and adequately furnishing the room; and, after discussion, it was agreed, subject to ratification by the various Governments concerned, that an expenditure of the sum of £1,000 be incurred for decorating and furnishing the Conference-room, the cost to be divided between the several Australasian Colonies upon the basis of the population of each colony.

It was further resolved: "That a request be made to the Governing Body of the Institute to use, as far as practicable, Australasian woods in the fitting and furnishing of the room."

It was further resolved: "That New Guinea be considered as attached to Queensland, and that the Queensland representatives should take charge of the space allotted to that dependency."

It was further resolved: "That it be a recommendation to the Executive Council to add Sir John Bray to the special Committee for the colonial collections."

The subject of officials to take charge of the Australasian Section, and the various divisions thereof, was discussed at considerable length, and it was finally resolved: "That, subject to the ratification of the various Governments concerned, this meeting recommends the appointment of a principal curator, with the necessary clerical and labour staff, by the Australasian Colonies as a whole, with such further technical assistance as may hereafter be found necessary and agreed upon."