

1900.
NEW ZEALAND.

AGENT-GENERAL'S VISIT TO PHILADELPHIA.

REPORT OF THE AGENT-GENERAL FOR NEW ZEALAND ON HIS OFFICIAL VISIT TO PHILADELPHIA TO ATTEND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMERCIAL CONGRESS.

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

The AGENT-GENERAL to the Right Hon. the PREMIER.

Westminster Chambers, 13, Victoria Street, London, S.W.,
28th November, 1899.

SIR,—

In accordance with instructions I attended the International Commercial Congress at Philadelphia in October last, leaving England for that purpose on the 23rd September. Owing to the crowded state of the American Atlantic steamers at that season, it was necessary to start more than a week sooner than would have otherwise been required. When, too, we arrived at New York, we were informed that the opening of the Exhibition had been unavoidably postponed until some days later than the date previously notified to us. As a matter of fact, it did not open till the 12th October. I had the pleasure of travelling with Lieut.-General Sir Andrew Clarke, Agent-General for Victoria; Sir Horace Tozer, Agent-General for Queensland, and the Hon. Dr. J. A. Cockburn, Agent-General for South Australia: all acting as official delegates for their respective colonies at the Congress. The Agent-General for Western Australia, whose passage had been taken, was unavoidably detained at the last moment by important Government business, and New South Wales was represented by Colonel Bell, the United States Consul in Sydney, whom we met on arriving at Philadelphia.

I stayed in Philadelphia a fortnight, and during that time the kindness and hospitality shown us by the municipality, by various institutions and bodies of citizens, and by private persons could not have been exceeded. In this way I was enabled to visit Washington, Atlantic City, and also the great workshops of the Pennsylvania railway system at Altoona, at the foot of the Alleghenies. I may here observe that while in Philadelphia I took the opportunity of visiting the Baldwin Locomotive Works, and was very courteously shown over them by one of the managers.

While at Washington, and also at Philadelphia, I made it my business to inquire into the prospects of the Panama and Nicaragua Canals. Thanks mainly to the courtesy of one of the officers of the Isthmian Canal Commission at Washington, I was enabled to gain interesting and valuable information. This I have supplemented since my return to London by documents placed at my disposal by the Board of Trade here, and I have also succeeded in getting other papers from Paris relating specially to the French company now at work at Panama. A document, however, which will be necessary to make the collection anything like complete will not be available for about another month. At the end of that time I propose to make a separate report to the Government upon the subject. It is possible also that I may have to write to you confidentially upon the same matter.

On leaving Philadelphia I travelled with Sir Andrew Clarke and Dr. Cockburn to Canada by way of Boston, at which city we were the guests of the Massachusetts Reform Club, an important non-political body of social students and investigators. These we addressed on the institutions of our respective colonies. In Canada we visited Montreal, Quebec, and Ottawa. At Quebec we were entertained by the local Board of Trade—a body more analogous to one of our chambers of commerce than to the Government department called Board of Trade in England. I delivered an address upon the possibilities of extended trade and intercourse between New Zealand and Canada, with special reference to the Pacific cable. In Ottawa a deputation waited upon us from the Board of Trade of the City of Toronto, asking us to visit them and be their guests at a banquet. I greatly regret that time did not allow me to do this, as Toronto is perhaps the most progressive city in the Dominion. The deputation which met us in Ottawa was in itself large and representative, and I was able to make them a short address upon the same topics as I had spoken on in Quebec. Previously to this I had met in Philadelphia the Canadian commercial delegates to the exhibition there, and had had very interesting conversations with them upon the future trade relations of the Dominion and New Zealand. I am convinced that the producers and manufacturers of Canada are anxious to establish and improve trade relations with our colony. They look to see these naturally grow as one of the results of the laying of the Pacific cable and of improved steam communication across the Pacific. I feel sure that if at any time the Government should see fit