

P E T I T I O N

OF THE

WELLINGTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE,

PRAYING FOR A REVISION

OF THE

C U S T O M S T A R I F F .

To the Honourable the House of Representatives of New Zealand, in Parliament assembled. The humble petition of William McLeod Bannatyne, Chairman of the Wellington Chamber of Commerce:—

Sheweth—

That the members of the Wellington Chamber of Commerce, in common with most persons engaged in mercantile transactions throughout the Colony of New Zealand, have long felt that the present Customs Tariff is unjust in principle, and unnecessarily complicated in its details.

That the Chamber has, therefore, continued to remonstrate with the Government and Legislature on this subject, since the first introduction of the existing Tariff.

That in the year 1858, the Chamber prepared a Report, shewing that, without injuriously affecting the Revenue, the Tariff might be simplified; and when the "Customs Duties Act" of that year was passed, without giving opportunity for the expression of public opinion, the Chamber memorialized the Right Honourable the Secretary of State for the Colonies, setting forth at length the objections to the Tariff, and praying that Her Majesty's Assent might not be given to the Act.

That in the early part of the year 1861, the Chamber addressed the Colonial Government on the subject; and in the correspondence that ensued, submitted proofs of the allegation that the present Tariff was objectionable, among other reasons, because of the large discretionary power which the Commissioner of Customs was thereby enabled or permitted to exercise.

That your Petitioner therefore prays your Honourable House to consent to a revision of the Tariff on the following grounds:—

1. That the system of collecting duties by the outside measurements of packages, is both absurd and unjust, causing the least valuable goods to pay (in most cases) the largest amount of duty.
2. That the discretionary power left in the hands of the Commissioner of Customs, makes the operation of the Tariff uncertain and unequal.
3. That the rapidly increasing facilities for intercommunication between Australian Colonies, renders it more than ever desirable that the Customs Tariff of New Zealand should be assimilated as nearly as possible to the Tariffs in operation in the other Colonies.

Your Petitioner respectfully requests permission to lay on the table of your Honourable House the following documents, which will, your Petitioner believes, support the allegations of this Petition, without the necessity of making it of most inconvenient length.

1. Report intended as the basis of a Memorial to His Excellency the Governor of New Zealand on the subject of the "Customs Amendment Act, 1861."
2. Memorial to the Right Honourable Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, M.P., Bart., Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies (included in Appendix to the Fourth Annual Report of the Wellington Chamber of Commerce, p.p. 22, 23).
3. Memorials (two) to His Excellency Col. Thomas Gore Browne, Governor of New Zealand, correspondence with His Excellency's Government, and Memorandum on the Tariff (included in Appendix to Fifth Annual Report of the aforesaid Chamber, p.p. 25-34).

And your Petitioner prays that your Honourable House will not allow the present Session to pass over without repealing the present Customs Tariff, and substituting for it one assimilated as nearly as practicable to the Tariff of the Colony of Victoria.

And your Petitioner, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

W. M. BANNATYNE,  
Chairman of Chamber of Commerce.

Chamber of Commerce,  
Wellington, 22nd August, 1862.