

## REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONERS.

Wellington, 24th August, 1877.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY.

The Commissioners appointed by Your Excellency in 1875 to make arrangements to secure the representation of New Zealand at the Philadelphia Exhibition of 1876 respectfully submit the following report of the action taken towards the performance of the duties entrusted to them:—

The Commissioners immediately took steps to carry out the object for which they were appointed.

Thirty-three meetings were held for the transaction of business, and an abstract of the minutes of the proceedings at these meetings will be found in Appendix A, and in Appendix B will be found an abstract of the correspondence which the Commissioners have had on matters relating to the Exhibition.

The first meeting was held on the 24th July, but no active measures could be taken until a meeting on the 11th of August, as the Commissioners were unacquainted with the measures taken by Government previous to the receipt of their commissions in appointing local committees.

Regulations for the guidance of exhibitors in the various provinces were printed and distributed through the agency of the local committees, when such were formed, and in other cases to the Deputy Superintendents of provinces. These regulations provided that all exhibits should be in Wellington by the 14th November, in order to allow time for their being examined and, if necessary, re-packed before being sent to America.

This date was, however, where necessary, extended to allow of certain exhibits being included which could not otherwise have been forwarded, such as wool and grain.

It was the aim of the Commissioners to confine the collections sent from New Zealand as much as possible to the raw products of the country, and articles manufactured from them, except in the case of articles which would exhibit the history of the colony or its scenery.

Particular care was also taken that nothing should be forwarded which would not stand a critical examination.

The articles of which the Commissioners particularly desired the collection were chiefly as follows:—

- Gold,
- Grain,
- Wool,
- Coal,
- Timber,
- Flax,
- Rope, &c.,
- Kauri gum,
- Tanning barks,
- Leather,
- Dyes,
- Paint,
- Preserved meat,
- Wine, beer, and spirits,
- Tobacco leaf and cigars,
- Mineral waters,
- Minerals and ores.

In view of the short time afforded for gathering a collection worthy of the colony, the Commissioners notified that they would consider any suggestions made to them by the local committees as to the purchase of any specimens of raw products of the colony which were not freely given by exhibitors, and this offer was in several instances availed of by exhibitors, but not by any means to the extent for which the Commissioners had made provision.

As will be seen by the catalogue, the colony did not send a very large collection for exhibition. The only parts of the colony adequately represented were Canterbury, Wellington, and Nelson. In the provinces of Auckland and Otago the local committees, if any were appointed, contributed nothing. Marlborough offered one exhibit, which, however, it was not in the power of the Commissioners to accept. Nelson sent a fair collection of its minerals, Westland of its timbers, Taranaki a small miscellaneous collection, Auckland some petroleum, Otago three exhibits, and Hawke's Bay none, while Wellington sent only one exhibit of wool, its chief other exhibits being timbers and feather furs. Canterbury alone of all the districts of the colony sent a fair representation of its chief products in the form of wool and grain. These can hardly be taken as representations of the country, and it will be at once seen that a much greater variety of exhibits might be afforded if only there had been time allowed for collecting them.

Of gold the Commissioners sent a large exhibit collected by Mr. Tolhurst, the manager of the Bank of New Zealand, and another large and important collection was that made by Mr. Woon (by permission of the late Sir Donald M'Lean) of garments, weapons, &c., belonging to Wanganui natives.

These were obtained by the Commissioners without the aid of the local committees, as it was thought by so doing more complete and representative collections could be made.

A sum of £3,500 was placed on the Estimates for 1875-6 at the request of the Commissioners. Of this sum only about £900 was spent during that financial year.

The Assembly then voted a sum of £800 for the year 1876-7.

During that year the accounts for expenses at the Exhibition were rendered amounting to about £2,400.

The total expenditure was therefore £3,300, or £200 short of the Commissioners' estimate, while