

1879.

NEW ZEALAND.

REPATRIATION OF PAUPER LUNATICS

(PAPERS RELATING TO).

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

The SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES to His Excellency the GOVERNOR.

SIR,—

Downing Street, 30th May, 1877.

I have the honor to transmit to you the accompanying copy of a correspondence with the Foreign Office, relative to the repatriation of British and French pauper lunatics.

It appears that the repatriation of such persons has been discontinued as between the parent countries, and I am disposed to think that it may be convenient to extend this arrangement to their colonies, thereby avoiding the mistakes, trouble, and expense which have been found to attend the opposite practice.

I shall be glad to receive the views of your Government on the subject.

The Officer Administering the Government, New Zealand.

I have, &c.,
CARNARVON.

Enclosures.

The FOREIGN OFFICE to the COLONIAL OFFICE,

SIR,—

Foreign Office, 17th November, 1876.

I am directed by the Earl of Derby to transmit to you, herewith, to be laid before Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies, copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Consul General at Algiers, in which he applies for instructions as to the disposal of a lunatic Irishwoman named Bridget Sheen, who is now in the Civil Hospital of Constantine, where there is no accommodation for lunatics, and whose repatriation is requested by the Préfet of the city.

This application has given rise to a question of some difficulty, which appears to Lord Derby to deserve careful consideration.

The question of repatriation of foreign lunatics and paupers at the request of the Government of the country by whom they may have been maintained, is one which has, at different periods, formed the subject of correspondence between Her Majesty's Government and the Government of France.

In former times, Her Majesty's Government have been in the habit of assenting to such applications on the part of the French Government for the repatriation of English lunatics, although by doing so they entailed serious burdens on some English parishes.

But in 1871, they were induced to look more closely into the question, and having ascertained that, by the law and practice of this country, destitute foreigners affected with mental imbecility are habitually received and taken care of in the parochial establishments—as it appeared, on inquiry, to a very great extent—without any demand being made on the Government of the country of which they might be natives, for their repatriation, they decided not to adopt a different system in regard to similar cases of British subjects found destitute in foreign countries.

In communicating at the time this decision to the French Chargé d'Affaires in this country—a decision which has been recently confirmed in the case of a lunatic British subject confined at Bailleul—it was pointed out that the British Government are placed in a peculiar difficulty as regards the question, inasmuch as they have no legal authority to remove any person so circumstanced from this country, and are, therefore, precluded from proposing to foreign countries to agree to a system of mutual repatriation.

It was added that, in acting on the conclusion above referred to, Her Majesty's Government had less scruple than might otherwise have been the case, since, from inquiries which had carefully been made, they had reason to believe that on striking a balance of cases for repatriation, it would be greatly to the disadvantage of this country.

But, however desirable the arrangement thus come to by Lord Granville may be as regards France and the United Kingdom, Lord Derby has some doubts whether it would be convenient to apply it to the colonies of either nation, as it is apprehended that it would be still more largely to the disadvantage of England, which possesses a greater number of colonies than France or any other nation.

His Lordship understands that the general practice in British Colonies, where a case arises of a foreign lunatic being destitute, is for the authorities to call on the Consul of his nation to take steps