

1903.

NEW ZEALAND.

PREFERENTIAL TRADE PROPOSALS:

COPY OF CABLEGRAM SENT BY THE PREMIER TO THE AGENT-GENERAL.

Return to an Order of the House of Representatives dated the 24th July, 1903.

Ordered, "That there be laid before this House a copy of the cablegram sent, as mentioned by the Premier in the House on Tuesday, to correct the erroneous report which had been attributed to him in the British Parliament as to negotiations, under certain eventualities, of terms adverse to British trade with other nations."—(Mr. DUTHIE.)

COPY OF CABLEGRAM.

Agent-General for New Zealand, London.

In the course of his speech at Hokitika Mr. Seddon said, with regard to the question of preferential tariff, an exhaustive inquiry would disclose that Great Britain was weakening industrially and commercially relatively to America and other nations. Should the drift now going on in that direction continue? Great Britain's dominions over the seas had made overtures, and were in earnest in their desire to help, and were prepared to make sacrifices to insure the stability of the Empire. They were ready to give preference to British manufactures. The position therefore was: (1.) Shall the present state of drift continue? (2.) Shall the colonies assist the Mother-country, and the Mother-country in turn help the colonies? (3.) The colonies would be driven to make arrangements with other countries if offers of the colonies to the Mother-country were rejected. Such a situation might force the colonies into reciprocal trade with other nations; but he would greatly regret being a party to any reciprocal treaty with alien countries. Simultaneously with the passing of a New Zealand Act offering preference to England a law would also be passed providing for reciprocal relations with Canada and the Commonwealth of Australia. The Premier's announcement was received with enthusiasm. In conclusion, a resolution was carried expressing continued confidence in the Government, approving of the preference-trade resolution of the Conference between Premiers in London and Mr. Chamberlain, and further stating that in the opinion of the meeting fiscal proposals were essential to British unity, and would tend to break down alien fiscal barriers without injuring British trade, and would also tend to advance wages and improve conditions of work in the United Kingdom. The New Zealand Press generally approves the preferential-trade proposals.

Otira, 8th June, 1903.

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