RETURN

To an Order of the House for a return of all correspondence, since January, 1884, between the Provincial Government and any person or persons who have made application for the bonus offered by Statute for the erection of a Woollen Mill within the Province.

JNO. ROBSON,
Provincial Secretary.

Provincial Secretary's Office,
18th March, 1886.

A letter from Mr. W. Skene, dated 11th March, 1884, making enquiries with regard to the establishment of a woollen mill in this Province, has been unfortunately mislaid. Its contents, however, are indicated by the reply of the Honourable the Provincial Secretary, dated 3rd May, 1884.

The Provincial Secretary to Mr. W. Skene.

VICTORIA, B. C., 3rd May, 1884.

SIR,—Replying to your letter of the 11th March last, I beg to forward a copy of an Act to encourage the manufacture of woollen goods in British Columbia; also a copy of a By-Law passed by the Municipal Council of Victoria in 1881, offering, under certain conditions, a further bonus of $5,000 if the mill be located within the limits of this city. I believe the New Westminster City Council would also be prepared to offer similar inducements for the establishment of a woollen factory there.

The questions asked in your communication may be briefly replied to as follows:—

1st. No woollen mill has hitherto been established in British Columbia.

2nd. The Provincial Government offer monetary assistance only.

3rd. The Provincial Legislature have no control over the customs duties, which are collected by, and belong to, the Dominion Government.

4th. The wool crop of British Columbia is of medium quality, and, of course, all exported. During the twelve months ending 30th June, 1883, a total of 96,548 lbs., of which the authorities had cognizance, was sent away. The value of this, as returned by the Custom House, was $17,438. This amount, however, by no means represents the total wool crop of British Columbia. Some people are of opinion that an equal quantity is smuggled into the United States; but, at any rate, 150,000 lbs. would be a perfectly safe estimate of our local yield.

5th. The Indians are under the immediate supervision of the Dominion, not the Provincial, Government; and the same may be said with regard to the militia and their uniform. It may, however, be considered probable that local manufacturers would receive the preference "at equivalent prices."

The Provincial Government have every reason to believe that a woollen mill, if ably and economically conducted, would prove a most gratifying financial success. This opinion, though lacking the authority of a personal knowledge of the business, such as you possess, is based on the general circumstances and surroundings of the case, as for example:—Wool is sold here at a nominal rate, taken to the woollen mills in California and elsewhere, and on its return to British Columbia as a manufactured article is met with a heavy duty.

I enclose a statement, compiled at the Custom House, with regard to the imports of woollen goods, also the tariff on such articles, and I have mailed to your address the latest hand-book on the climate and resources of this Province.

I have, &c.,
(Signed) JNO. ROBSON,
Provincial Secretary.

Mr. W. Skene to the Provincial Secretary.

39, WOODFORD TERRACE,
DEWSBURY, Eng., 31st May, 1884.

SIR,—I have the honour to acknowledge, with grateful thanks, your letter of 3rd instant; also of 1884 hand-book, and have carefully studied their contents. The Victoria offer of bonus is very liberal, but I fear the locality would not be so well adapted for the purpose of a woollen mill as New Westminster, the chief consideration to economy—water-power—being apparently a wanting within the limits of the former city; at least, the imperfect maps of your Province procurable here do not show any river at Victoria, and Mr. Beeton informs me *he* is not aware of one being there. Coal again could, I should suppose, be more cheaply procured at New Westminster or Burrard Inlet than at Victoria, while being nearer the terminus of the C. P. R., also shows prospective advantages in favour of the mainland. I have, therefore—taking advantage of your hint as to the possible disposition of the New Westminster City Council to offer similar assistance to the Victorians—written by this mail to the Mayor of the former city on this point, and mentioning to him that I have had the honour of exchanging a letter with yourself. I have added that "as my said letter of 11th March contained my views fully on the position, I have no doubt you would kindly transmit the same for his perusal, should he desire it."

I have, &c.,
(Signed) WM. SKENE.

Mr. F. H. Newton to the Deputy Provincial Secretary.

LINDSAY, Ontario, Ca., May 15th, 1885.

DEAR SIR,—Having been in correspondence with Mr. Baker, M. P., now at Ottawa, in reference to building a woollen mill at Victoria, he has kindly referred me to you respecting the bonuses offered by way of encouragement.

Would you be good enough to inform me if the bonus offered by the Local Government and the Corporation of Victoria are still offered, or has some one taken advantage of them and built a mill? If not, I feel desirous of coming there and building a new two-set mill, for before long I believe I could make one pay, providing there is any wool grown in the country.

Would you oblige by giving me all particulars you can regarding the project, also your own individual opinion as to ultimate success of mill if started. I understand the business, have money, and could pull it through if there is an opening for it, without there being any risk for any one—that is, of course, providing there is wool in the country. If, however, there is any one already established there, or intending to do so this summer, of course there would be no use of my doing so.

By replying as promptly as convenient, you would oblige, as, if your favour should prove satisfactory, I should leave for British Columbia at once, having already sold out my mill in this Province.

I might say further that, with Mr. Baker's advice, I have also written Mr. J. D. Robinson, of Victoria, but, of course, not yet received a reply.

Yours respectfully,
(Signed) F. H. NEWTON.

The Deputy Provincial Secretary to Mr. F. H. Newton.

VICTORIA, B. C., 3rd June, 1885.

DEAR SIR,—In reply to your letter of the 15th ultimo, I beg to enclose, for your information, a copy of "An Act to encourage the manufacture of woollen goods in British Columbia," and to state that the bonus therein authorized is still available.

The wool crop of British Columbia is, I am informed, of medium quality, and, of course, under present circumstances, all exported. I have not yet seen the returns for the year ending 30th June, 1884, but the following extracts from a letter addressed by the Honourable the Provincial Secretary, in May, 1884, to a gentleman in England who had applied for information with regard to wool, may be of interest:—

"During the twelve months ending the 30th June, 1883, a total of 96,548 lbs., of which the authorities had cognizance, was sent away. The value of this, as returned by the Custom House, was $17,438. This amount, however, by no means represents the total wool crop of British Columbia. Some people are of opinion that an equal quantity is smuggled into the United States; but, at any rate, 150,000 lbs. would be a perfectly safe estimate of our local yield."

"The Provincial Government have every reason to believe that a woollen mill, if ably and economically conducted, would prove a most gratifying financial success. This opinion, though lacking the authority of a personal knowledge of the business, such as you possess, is based upon the general circumstances and surroundings of the case, as for example:—Wool is sold here at a nominal rate, taken to the woollen mills in California and elsewhere, and on its return to British Columbia as a manufactured article is met with a heavy duty."

So far as I am aware, the above applies with equal truth to the position of affairs now. It is only fair, however, to state that the gentleman to whom the letter was addressed did not avail himself of the opportunity. At the same time I may add that this department is without any information as to the reasons which led him to decide adversely to the enterprise.

I see that you are in communication with Mr. J. D. Robinson, C. M. C., Victoria, with reference to the bonus offered by the city. I shall, therefore, leave you in his hands, as one better qualified than myself to give you information in that regard.

I remain, &c.,

(Signed) T. ELWYN,

Deputy Provincial Secretary.

Mr. F. H. Newton to the Deputy Provincial Secretary.

LINDSAY, Ontario, July 12th, 1885.

DEAR SIR,—I have to trouble you once more. Though I wrote twice to Mr. J. D. Robinson, and Mr. Faulkner, who kindly offered to assist me, has written to Hon. Mr. Robson regarding the establishment of the woollen mill in Victoria, we have so far been able to learn nothing, nor can I find out whether the Council is entertaining the offer or not. May I ask you to send me word as to what has been done, or likely to be done, in the City Council, and what chance I am likely to have with them. Your favour of June 3rd was so favourable I immediately began preparations for leaving for Victoria, and I can now come any time at a few days' notice. By writing me, or wiring me here at my expense, what has been so far done, I should be obliged, as I do not wish to lose any time if they are going to accept my offer, and the mill should be built before Christmas to be ready for next season's work. Accept my thanks for your trouble on my behalf in the past.

Yours, &c.,

Signed) F. H. NEWTON.

The Deputy Provincial Secretary to Mr. F. H. Newton.

VICTORIA, B. C., 23rd July, 1885.

DEAR SIR,—In reply to your letter of the 12th instant, I have to state that I am informed that your proposal to the City Council, Victoria, with regard to the erection of a woollen mill, was so over-loaded with conditions and trammelled with restrictions, that the Council declined to entertain it. I am further told that the decision of the Council has been communicated to you.

Of course, you will understand that the Provincial Government cannot interfere in the matter.

Faithfully yours,

(Signed) T. ELWYN,

Deputy Provincial Secretary.

Mr. F. H. Newton to the Deputy Provincial Secretary.

LINDSAY, ONT., August, 2nd, 1885.

DEAR SIR,—Your kind favour duly to hand and much obliged for the trouble you have taken in my behalf.

I might state I have received no communication in any way from the Council of Victoria, and am much surprised that there should be any misunderstanding of my request to the Council, as there evidently is. All I asked was for a bonus of $8,000, viz., $5,000 from the city and the $3,000 offered by the Provincial Government, and by reason of my putting up a *two* set mill when the Provincial Government bonus only asked for *one*, a free site in Victoria to erect the mill. There were no conditions attached in any way. I further asked the Council if they could not see their way to grant this, to let me know what inducements they *were* prepared to offer. However, I will wait a day or two to see if any reply arrives from Mr. Robinson, and will write him again explaining matters that they do not appear to understand, so I hope all will be right there.

I may further say I will be in Victoria within the month and see for myself where the trouble is, when I will call on you some day when your business engagements will permit.

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Respectfully,

(Signed) F. H. NEWTON.

P. S.—If you happen to see Hon. Mr. Robson or Mr. Robinson, C. M. C., kindly mention to them they are under some mistake regarding my offer, and to permit the matter to stand till my letter arrives next week and oblige

F. H. N.

Messrs. Campbell and Cunningham to the Provincial Secretary.

NEW WESTMINSTER, February 12th, 1886.

HON. SIR,—Your letter of 16th November* last to Mr. George Campbell in reference to woollen factory, was duly received, and on the strength of it we proceeded to work to carry to success the erection of a woollen mill. Please permit me to give you a description of building of new woollen factory and the machinery to be placed therein in New Westminster, as follows:—The building we propose to erect, and has now placed down the foundation timbers on Lot 15, Block VII., City of New Westminster, Front Street, which lot we have purchased for said purpose. The building will have four flats; first, or foundation, will be used for fulling, scouring and finishing blankets, flannels, and tweeds and yarns; the next flat, 40 feet square, will be used for weaving and other business; the 3rd floor will be 40x60 feet, will be used by machinery for the purpose of carrying and spinning, carding, etc., and the top floor 40x60 feet will be used for a drying room and other purposes. We are putting up the building sufficiently large to be able to use it as a two-set mill if the future business of the country requires it. We are putting in all the machinery required by the Provincial Act, and more. We are erecting outside of main building a house for engine and boiler, so that the fly wheel will work inside the main building, and connect with lines of shafting upstairs. We have also written to the east after the engine and boiler, and all the necessary machinery and plant, and expect to have it by first cars through from the east on the C. P. R. I might also state that we have formed a joint stock company, limited, and had a meeting of the shareholders, and appointed our provisional directors, and forwarded the necessary papers to secure our charter, advertised for tenders and have let the job. It is a very substantial building; sills 10x12 and posts and beams 10x10.

Honourable sir, we most sincerely trust that this description of building will meet with your honourable approval and that you will kindly condescend to answer at your earliest convenience, and inform us if this will be sufficient to draw the Provincial bonus. I would, if you require it, refer you to the Hon. J. W. Trutch, Victoria, to whom I had a letter of introduction from Right Hon. Sir John Macdonald.

We remain, &c.,

(Signed) GEORGE CAMPBELL,
Manager, Company.

(Signed) ROBERT SANDFORD CUNNINGHAM,
Sec.-Treasurer, Company.

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*Private letter.

The Deputy Provincial Secretary to Messrs. Campbell and Cunningham.

VICTORIA, B. C., 18th February, 1886.

GENTLEMEN,—In reply to your letter of the 12th instant I am instructed to forward for your information a copy of "An Act to encourage the manufacture of woollen goods in British Columbia," and to state that the bonus mentioned therein will be paid to the person or persons who shall first comply with the provisions thereof.

I am, &c.,

(Signed) T. ELWYN,
Deputy Provincial Secretary.

Messrs. Campbell and Cunningham to the Provincial Secretary.

NEW WESTMINSTER, February 19th, 1886.

HON. SIR,—We have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 18th inst., enclosing a copy of the Bonus Act for our information, and stating that the bonus will be paid to the person or persons who shall first comply with the provisions thereof.

Hon. Sir, your letter is quite satisfactory as far as it goes, but in some respects it appears to be rather indefinite. Last year our Mr. Campbell wrote* to you for information as to what encouragement the Government would be prepared to give towards the establishment of a woollen factory in the Province.

In replying to his letter you enclosed a copy of the Bonus Act, and gave him every encouragement to expect that if he came out and established a factory in conformity with the requirements of the Act there would be no doubt about the bonus being available.

Hon. Sir, that letter was dated on the 16th of November last, and upon the strength of it the undersigned made arrangements, came out to this country, and acting in good faith have secured a site and *commenced building operations*, and ordered the *necessary* machinery, and there is every reason to expect that the building will be completed and the machinery ready for effective operation by next September. Now, in an undertaking like this it will be readily understood that something more definite from the Government than is contained in your letter of the 18th instant would be more satisfactory to *us*, and especially to the contractors and others with whom we may have dealings.

We would, therefore, respectfully ask a definite assurance that in the event of the factory being completed in accordance with the requiremenes of the Act, and in successful operation on or before the end of September next, the bonus shall be forthcoming.

Hon. Sir, we may remind you that the buildings are of a very substantial character, and arranged to amply accommodate a *plant* with double the *capacity required* by the Bonus Act, and we need not assure you that having had many years' practical experience in the *business* it is our determination to produce a factory in every respect first-class of its size.

Hon. Sir, your early reply in the direction above indicated will greatly oblige, as we are anxious to push the work forward with that energy and thoroughness which *assured confidence* tends to inspire.

We are, &c.,

(Signed) GEORGE CAMPBELL,
Manager, Company.

(Signed) ROBERT SANDFORD CUNNINGHAM,
Secretary, Company.

*Treated as a private letter and not fyled.

The Provincial Secretary to Mr. R. S. Cunningham.

VICTORIA, B. C., 23rd February, 1886.

SIR,—I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 19th instant, expressing a desire to receive some more definite assurance than was contained in my letter of the 18th, that the bonus of $3,000 will be paid to your company.

The matter having been duly considered by the Executive, I am to inform you that the Government do not consider they would be justified in going beyond the terms of the Act, by which their actions are regulated. In fact, they have no power to do so.

It is believed, however, that if your company carry out the programme outlined in your letter, there can exist no reasonable ground for doubt in so far as securing the bonus is concerned.

I have, &c.,
(Signed) JNO. ROBSON,
Provincial Secretary.

[TELEGRAM.]

DEWSBURY, March 5.

To Robson, Victoria:—

Your letter 3rd May, '84. Are Woollen Acts, Provincial, Municipal, still available?
(Signed) WILLIAM SKENE.

The Provincial Secretary to Mr. W. Skene.

VICTORIA, B. C., 6th March, 1886.

SIR,—Referring to your telegram of yesterday, *re* Woollen Mill Acts, I have to inform you that application has already been made for the Government bonus by a company who have incorporated and have their buildings in course of erection at New Westminster, where they have also secured a municipal bonus.

It can scarcely be said, therefore, that the Provincial bonus is still available, but I think it probable that a proposition to establish a factory at Victoria would receive proper encouragement at the hands of the City Corporation.

I have, &c.,
(Signed) JNO. ROBSON,
Provincial Secretary.