

B. Rates of freight on produce from Melbourne to Western Australia. Since my return I have obtained the through rates from New Zealand to Western Australia and the ordinary rates to Melbourne, for comparison.

C. Rates of freight by German and French steamers.

W. T. GLASGOW,
Secretary and Inspector of Customs.

A.—RATES OF FREIGHT ON PRODUCE SHIPPED TO THE UNITED KINGDOM.

HON. PREMIER,—

In accordance with your instructions, I made inquiries while in Australia about the current rates of freight on produce shipped to the United Kingdom. I have tabulated the information received, and you will find it on sheet attached hereto. Since returning, I have ascertained the current New Zealand rates, and have included them for comparison in the table.

It will be seen that in Melbourne the rate for wool is less than that in Sydney to the extent of 5 per cent. for steamers and 10 per cent. for sailing vessels. In Adelaide the rate is about 50 per cent. higher for greasy and about 30 per cent. for scoured wool than in Sydney. In New Zealand the rate is about double that in Sydney. It is claimed that this is partly accounted for by the fact that in New Zealand the large steamers have to go to several ports to load; but this, it seems to me, is not a sufficient explanation.

In Melbourne the rate for frozen meat is slightly less than that in Sydney. In Adelaide it is 50 per cent. more than in Sydney. In New Zealand it is more than double during the season from November to May. During the winter the rate is reduced by about 25 per cent., but there is little exported at that time of the year. The Gear Company have an arrangement with the shipping companies for a reduction from the nominal rate in the event of the meat not bringing a certain price in London. The shipping companies thus share in the risk. The farmers who ship on their own account do not get any reduction in freight under any circumstances. If they ship through the Gear Company, and the latter get a reduction under the arrangement referred to, *it is not allowed* to the farmers by the Gear Company.

In Melbourne I ascertained that the railway-rate is 10½d. per mile for 8 tons. This is a special rate agreed to by the department with much reluctance before exporters erected the large freezing-works at Deniliquin. It will probably be increased. The Railway Department provides insulated cars, which are very efficient. These cars carry frozen meat for over forty hours in summer without any sign of thawing. Deniliquin mutton is carried on these cars two hundred miles without mechanical aids, such as ice. The shade temperature at Deniliquin sometimes reaches 114° Fahr. I was assured that meat could be safely carried from any railway-station in Australia to the seaboard if it is hard-frozen, and if the cars are properly insulated and large enough to contain, say, over three hundred carcasses. Government provides storage in Melbourne at 8d. per carcass for freezing, handling, and bagging. This is only meant to accommodate small farmers who have small lots. Not more than three thousand carcasses per week are dealt with in the Government store. The Department of Agriculture complains that 8d. per head involves a loss. Probably 10d. would cover the whole expense.

In the case of butter and cheese the rates appear to be the same in Melbourne, Sydney, and Adelaide. In the latter colony no cheese is as yet exported. In New Zealand the rate for butter is 10 per cent. more than in Australia, and for cheese about ½d. less.

W. T. GLASGOW,
Secretary and Inspector.

12th March, 1897.

RATES OF FREIGHT ON PRODUCE.

Article.	Melbourne.	Sydney.	Adelaide.	New Zealand.
Wool ..	Greasy, 4½d.—less 5 per cent. in steamers, 10 per cent. in sailers	* 1½d.; sailers and steamers the same	1½d.	1½d. steamers, 1½d. sailers.
" ..	Scoured, 1½d.—less 5 per cent. in steamers, 10 per cent. in sailers	1½d.; sailers and steamers the same	1½d.	1½d. steamers, 1½d. sailers.
Frozen meat ..	Government rate for small lots frozen for farmers, 1½d.	1½d.; sailers and steamers the same	1½d.	Sheep, 1½d., plus 10 per cent. from November to May; lamb, 1½d., plus 10 per cent. from November to May.
" ..	Freezing companies' rate, 1½d., sometimes falling to 1½d.	Sheep, 1½d., plus 10 per cent. from June to October; lambs, 1½d., plus 10 per cent. from June to October.
Butter ..	1½d. (all butter-freight contracts are arranged by the Government)	1½d.; sailers and steamers the same	1½d.	1½d., plus 10 per cent.
Cheese ..	he same	The same ..	None exported	1½d., plus 10 per cent.

* Dalgety and Co. quote greasy 1½d. to 1½d.; scoured, 1½d. to 1½d.; sailers and steamers the same.