

The Manchester rates are on a similar basis—that is, are inclusive of Manchester Ship Canal tolls and wharfage, delivery to railway-wagons, railway-carriage, and delivery at destination within the ordinary cartage limits.

13. Only a small group of specimen towns is given, in order to prevent the statement from being too voluminous; but the comparisons are types of the savings that can be effected to a very large number of towns. In the City of Manchester, and the immediately surrounding towns within carting distance, there is, of course, a very large saving as compared with bringing the produce from London, because only the Ship Canal charges and the cartage have to be paid.

14. The London comparison is given because London has hitherto been the distributing port for Australian produce. It is self-evident that Australian exporters, who confine their shipments to London, are practically excluding their produce from this the greatest consuming centre in England. If full cargoes are shipped from Australia the rates of sea-freight will be the same to Manchester as to London. To support this statement, it should be said that the Gulf line of steamers are ready and willing to carry the produce to Manchester on these terms. Mr. MacDougall, the managing owner of the line, has, in fact, given orders to his Australian agents to load steamers for Manchester direct whenever full cargoes can be obtained; but if only part cargo is shipped to Manchester, necessitating calling first at London with the remainder of the cargo, a higher rate of freight will be charged for the Manchester cargo to compensate for the delay and extra expenses.

15. Manchester is very much nearer than London to Bradford and other towns in Yorkshire, where Australian wool is largely consumed; and the experience of the "Gulf of Siam's" direct voyage, when she brought over five thousand bales of wool, shows that if the refrigerating space in the steamers is filled for Manchester there will be no difficulty in obtaining large quantities of wool to help to fill up the remaining space. The Yorkshire spinners are, as a matter of fact, wishful to have their wool imported *via* Manchester.

16. Another important fact is that the Smelting Corporation (Limited) are now erecting very extensive lead-smelting works on the Ship Canal banks at Ellesmere Port, with the intention of importing very large quantities of ore from Australia. This ore will also be available for filling up vacant space in the steamers.

17. The facilities for dealing with traffic at the Port of Manchester are at least equal to those at any other port in the Kingdom. The Colonial Consignment and Distributing Company (Limited) have just completed a cold-air store, with accommodation for one hundred thousand carcasses of sheep, on the docks at Manchester, into which meat and other provisions will be unloaded directly from the ship.

18. The Corporation of Manchester have also erected one of the finest cold-air stores in the Kingdom, within a short carting distance of the docks, to which the greater portion of the "Gulf of Siam" and "Timaru" cargoes was conveyed.

19. If the Australian Colonies were to develop a trade in live cattle, the animals could be received at Manchester direct from the ship into what Professor Robertson described as "one of the most perfectly arranged lairages and wharfs that I have ever seen." These lairages have also been erected by the Corporation of Manchester. They have at present accommodation for one thousand head of cattle, and arrangements have been made to extend the accommodation to three thousand head whenever the necessity arises. The steamers from Canada, previously referred to, have been bringing several hundred head of cattle to Manchester every voyage.

20. The Ship Canal Company is a railway company as well as a canal company, and has placed lines of railway all round its quays. These lines of railway are in direct communication with all the principal railways, and the Canal Company will take charge of and forward produce at inclusive "through rates," specimens of which are in the annexed statement, from the docks direct by rail to any town in the Kingdom. The docks are also in actual communication and working connection with all the inland canals of the country. Moreover, transshipment cargo can be dealt with expeditiously, as there are regular and frequent sailings from Manchester to all the principal coastwise ports.

21. The foregoing information justifies the Manchester Chamber of Commerce in addressing the various Australian Governments, and their Agents-General in London, with the view of impressing upon these Governments the desirability, in the interests of their agriculturalists, of taking steps to make a vigorous and sustained effort to introduce and make a regular market in this district, and the North of England generally, for the various descriptions of Australian produce for which the colonies are desirous of providing an increased outlet. Such an effort is necessary in order to establish a trade in a district which is already so largely supplied by other countries which desire to sell and push the sale of similar produce.

22. The Manchester Ship Canal Company, the port authority of Manchester, has provided the very best facilities, and is anxious to give all possible assistance to the Australian Colonies in this matter, but as the company has no power to trade its efforts must be limited to the endeavour to bring colonial exporters and Manchester importers and consumers together. The company believes, from its experience in connection with other producing countries, that if Australian productions were supplied to this market with such regularity as to become current articles of trade sellers would find that importers would buy large quantities "to arrive," or send out buying orders.

I have, &c.,

Hon. W. P. Reeves, Agent-General for New Zealand,
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