

to send to London or South Africa. As a necessary consequence, frozen meat has a bad reputation in Perth, which, however, would soon be overcome if we were able to land a few small cargoes of good-quality New Zealand frozen mutton and beef.

The wholesale prices ruling at the time in Perth were as follows: Beef, 5d. per pound; mutton, 5½d. per pound; pork, 6d. per pound. The above meat was being retailed in Perth at prices which would average somewhat as follows: Beef—rump-steak, 1s. per pound; sirloin, 9d. per pound; ribs, 8d. per pound. Mutton—legs and loins, 8d. per pound; hind-quarters, 7d. per pound; fore-quarters, 6d. per pound; sides, 6½d. per pound. Pork—chops, 10d. per pound; loins, legs, &c., 9d. per pound. All the above prices apply only to Perth and its immediate neighbourhood. In the inland towns and mining centres the retail prices range as follows: Beef, from 10d. to 1s. 3d. per pound; mutton, from 9d. to 1s. per pound; pork, from 1s. to 1s. 2d. per pound. Seeing that New Zealand mutton and beef can be landed in London at 4d. per pound and leave a margin of profit, it seems certain that Western Australia offers a fair field for our exports if it were not for the restrictions imposed by the Federal tariff and the absence of direct freight, to which I shall refer later.

#### *Facilities for Treatment and Carriage of Frozen Meat.*

The trade in frozen meat having been so badly handled, it is not surprising to note that the freezing-works are not all they should be, and the supply of frozen-meat vans short of what would be required in the event of a regular and well-conducted frozen-meat trade being inaugurated. At the same time it is only just to point out that the West Australian Government are beginning to realise that there is room for improvement, and steps have been taken to establish cold-storage in the inland centres, to improve the management of the Government Freezing-works in Perth, and to increase the supply of meat-vans. Prior to those steps being taken the available cold-storage in the Government works only amounted to 12,000 cubic feet, or, say, 4,000 carcasses of mutton, and the meat-vans were only capable of holding about 4,500 carcasses, which, when one takes into account the large distances to be traversed, is a very inadequate supply.

#### FREIGHT.

There are at present but few facilities for a brisk interchange of products between New Zealand and Western Australia, which account for the limited business which has been transacted. One of the essentials for such a trade is unquestionably a direct service of steamers between the two colonies. Such a service need not be confined to those two colonies. It would serve the purpose equally well if arrangements could be made that the line of vessels which take up the direct trade between New Zealand and South Africa should make Fremantle a port of call, and that a hold or part of a hold should always be reserved for the West Australian trade; in fact, any means of bringing about at a reasonable cost a direct service of steamers at regular intervals of not less than one month or six weeks should be taken advantage of promptly. If this could be arranged, I have no doubt but that a steady demand for New Zealand products would arise, a demand which would be caused and maintained by the excellent quality of the produce which New Zealand is able to supply.

A careful consideration of the facts elicited by the Select Committee forces one to the following conclusions:—

1. That, the population of Western Australia being almost entirely engaged in mining pursuits, and the supply of agricultural products being very limited, there is in that country a good market for such foodstuffs as New Zealand produces.

2. That with the Federal duties removed, and a direct service of steamers established, New Zealand products would oust inferior supplies and take a firm hold of that market.

In addition to the statements contained in the evidence already referred to, I can only add that I met many of the principal citizens of the various towns all over Western Australia, to whom I supplied the fullest information possible, and noted that anxious inquiries were being made as to the possibility of a better supply of our products, and that one and all expressed most friendly feelings towards this colony.

I hope to keep in touch with Mr. J. M. Hopkins and other members of the Legislative Assembly of Western Australia, and if I can supply you with any further information from time to time I shall be most happy to do so.

Right Hon. R. J. Seddon, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

F. THEO. BOYS.

## APPENDIX F.

### REPORTS FROM MR. J. GRAHAM GOW, TRADE REPRESENTATIVE.

SIR,—

Durban, Natal, 7th October, 1901.

I had yesterday a very interesting interview with Sir Albert Hime, Premier of Natal, who gave me a very cordial reception, and with whom I discussed my mission. He thought that, if regular shipments could be arranged, the prospects of trade from New Zealand to Natal were very encouraging. There is a formidable cold-storage and meat ring to be fought in South Africa. The company is very strong financially, and has a monopoly of the trade in frozen meat; but it is, of course, in bad odour with the public, and it was no doubt the idea of weakening or breaking the ring that secured the Government this year a comparatively large vote for the erection of public cold-storage works in Durban and other parts of the colony. I made the suggestion to the Premier that the New Zealand and Natal Governments might advantageously work together to