

it will be very instructive if you can secure the figures of the War Office and Admiralty purchases from Australian firms in connection with frozen meat, beef, jams, butter, oats, flour, bran, and horses.

We would respectfully request that you cable Mr. Chamberlain, notifying him of the considerable dissatisfaction existing in the colonies on this account and suggesting that you be given particulars of all requirements, the same to be notified here, tenders obtained, the price to be given by telegraph direct to the War Office. This is the only way the business can be conducted on its merits, and by direct dealings with the Australian houses the difference between the figures obtained by the latter from South African houses, as compared with the prices paid by the Imperial Government, will at once become apparent.

The advantage to the War Office in dealing direct, as far as frozen meat is concerned, with the producers here has been already pointed out, and the same remarks would apply in the case of other lines if notification were made here and time allowed for submitting offers.

	Yours, &c.,
<i>Meat Preservers.</i>	(For the Rosewater Packing Company (Limited)) J. ROBERTS, Director.
<i>Flour Merchants.</i>	BRUNTON AND CO.
<i>Food Merchants</i>	(For and on behalf of Parsons Bros. and Co. Prop. (Limited)) E. F. PARSONS, Director.
<i>Grain Merchants.</i>	JOHN BRIDGE AND CO.
<i>Flour Merchants.</i>	GILLESPIE BROS. AND CO.
<i>Produce Merchants.</i>	H. PRESCOTT AND CO.
<i>Meat and Produce Exporters.</i>	BIRT AND CO. (LIMITED) (E. C. BECKETT, Secretary).

The Right Hon. Edmund Barton, P.C., &c., Melbourne.

No. 2.

COLONIAL OFFICE TO WAR OFFICE AND ADMIRALTY.

SIR,—

Downing Street, 31st January, 1902.

With reference to your letter of the 13th January, I am directed by Mr. Secretary Chamberlain to transmit to you, for the consideration of { Mr. Secretary Brodrick }
the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty }
copy of a despatch from the Governor-General of Australia, enclosing a copy of a minute from his Ministers on the subject of the supplies of meat, produce, and horses required by the army and navy.

2. It will be observed that Mr. Barton desires that early consideration should be given to the questions dealt with in this minute.

3. A similar letter has been addressed to the { Admiralty.
War Office.

I am, &c.,
FRED. GRAHAM.

No. 3.

ADMIRALTY TO COLONIAL OFFICE.

SIR,—

Admiralty, S.W., 13th May, 1902.

With reference to your letter of 31st January last, I am commanded by my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to acquaint you, for the information of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, that they have given their careful consideration to the despatch from the Governor-General of Australia, with accompanying minute from his Ministers, on the subject of the supplies of meat, produce, &c., required for the navy and army.

My Lords desire me in the first place to reiterate the statement already made that they are fully alive to the advisability of developing, so far as possible, business relations with colonial producers, and they have encouraged, and will continue to encourage, such relations by placing orders with colonial firms whenever it is possible to do so consistently with due regard to quality and economy.

As regards the several points raised in Mr. Barton's minute, it will be most convenient to deal with them paragraph by paragraph, premising that it is with the supply of Australian meat that the Admiralty is chiefly concerned.

Paragraphs 2, 7, and 15.—In respect of the suggestion that timely notice should be given of forthcoming contracts so as to enable tenders to be called in Australia, I am to observe that tender-forms for canned meats are issued to the English agents of Australian packers, and it is understood that most, if not all, the leading Australian packers are represented in this country. These packers are kept acquainted by their agents with the Admiralty specification, and a price is arranged between the agent and the principal by telegraph, if necessary, and the tender form lodged by the English agent. The Admiralty only purchases meat of approved brands which have previously been tried and found satisfactory, and the meat is supplied under a two-years' guarantee that all tins condemned during that period are replaced free of charge. To advertise in Australia, as proposed, would entail delay and possibly result in offers being made of brands either unsuitable for Admiralty requirements or of a quality unknown to the Department.