

In Hull and Newcastle very little New Zealand produce was to be found, although some small lots of butter have occasionally been tried there. Both these ports, of course, are in close communication with the Continent, and the bulk of Danish butter is landed in this country at one or other of them.

In Scotland, Glasgow is still the chief distributing centre for New Zealand dairy-produce, although Leith is greatly increasing the quantity handled there. In Dundee we found a number of merchants who have been giving attention to our dairy-produce, and these all speak most highly of it, and are anxious to deal more extensively in future in it. We could not hear of any New Zealand meat having been sold in Dundee, but both in Aberdeen and in Inverness we found that New Zealand lamb had penetrated. In the latter town Messrs. Copper and Co. have a high-class retail establishment, and there have offered New Zealand lamb to their customers. The demand, however, as yet in the far north is very limited, but the fact that it has reached there, and that it is highly spoken of by those who have used it, affords pleasing indication of an extensive growth likely to take place very shortly in the distribution.

In all parts visited Mr. Gow and I found that general satisfaction was expressed with the quality of New Zealand butter. The prices, however, realised for it in London and the south have been so high throughout this season—on several occasions touching those paid for Danish—that naturally there has been less opportunity than usual for merchants in new centres to handle it to their advantage. The shortage of supplies from Australia has also been the means of preventing New Zealand butter being more widely circulated than hitherto, all lots offering meeting with a ready sale in the old centres of distribution.

In travelling throughout the country Mr. Gow and I made particular inquiries as to what cold-air storage was available for frozen produce. Owing to the reports which are occasionally circulated in the colony as to the glut of frozen meat arriving in this country, and of the want of storage-accommodation for it, I am inclined to believe that an impression prevails in New Zealand that there are not sufficient cold-stores in existence. I am confirmed in this impression, having noticed occasionally in New Zealand papers remarks to the effect that the New Zealand Government should erect cold-stores in this country. Those who advocate the Government doing this certainly do not know the facts at this end. There is now ample storage provided for all requirements—which is steadily being added to—if only advantage was taken of it by those in whose hands the frozen produce from New Zealand is placed for disposal. The practice, however, of most of those handling it has hitherto been to concentrate everything in store in London. Naturally, the accommodation there being limited, the stores occasionally get full, and glut ensues. Were the stores throughout the country taken advantage of the complaint of want of storage-accommodation so often heard would be overcome. Not only is there ample accommodation now provided for all requirements, but directors of several of the stores we visited are most anxious to secure meat, and are willing to make considerable reductions in their charges from published rates in order to secure business. They are also willing to do all in their power to encourage the distribution of New Zealand meat in their centres direct from their stores. I am strongly of the opinion that if only New Zealand meat was railed in refrigerated vans direct from ship's side to these stores throughout the country instead of being all held in London, it would help greatly to develop the distribution of it throughout the provinces.

While in Hull and Newcastle we made close inquiry concerning the development of the Siberian butter trade with this country. On all hands it is expected that, owing to the encouragement being given by the Russian Government for the development of the farming industry in Siberia, the increase in the production of butter there will shortly become enormous. Very large tracts in Siberia are being opened up to dairy pursuits, and the system adopted by the Russian Government, while being somewhat similar to New Zealand so far as instruction and inspection are concerned, is most elaborate. Special fast trains of refrigerated vans are to be run direct from the dairy provinces to the ports of shipment, a journey occupying in some instances five or six days. A subsidy is being paid to the Wilson Line of steamers of £20,000 per annum, and this company is now building three large steamers specially for the Siberian trade. While the port of Riga may be occasionally blocked with ice in the winter time, the ports further south are to be availed of, so that there may be no interruption to direct shipment all the year round. The climate of Siberia in those districts where dairying is to be carried on is very similar, I understand, to that of Canada. It is not anticipated, therefore, that butter-making will be prosecuted throughout the year. It is believed rather that enormous quantities will be produced during summer, and that instead of shipping the make at one season considerable stocks will be held over in cold-store, and gradually put on the market here regularly throughout the year. Under these conditions I do not anticipate that Siberian butter will compete very hurtfully with our finest New Zealand brands. Of course, large quantities of any butter being put on the market at the same time as ours must to a certain extent hurt the sale, but with the reputation that New Zealand has built up for itself during the past two years for finest quality, I am under the impression that if this superiority is maintained and further improved, as in all probability it will be with care, there ought always to be a ready market at top prices for us.

While in Dundee Mr. Gow and I had the pleasure of being introduced to one of the leading retail merchants there. He informed us that he had been for some time handling New Zealand butter and cheese, and that both had given him the very greatest satisfaction, and that his customers now asked him specially by name for both. He showed us the cheese which he then had on his counter. I was specially interested in this—Awitu brand—as it was the first lot that had come under my notice bearing the impressed brand on the cheese itself. I had previously seen such brands on Canadian cheese, but not on New Zealand. I made inquiry as to the advantage of so branding, and was informed that it is favourably looked upon here, as it affords a guarantee to the purchasers that they are obtaining the New Zealand article. If it is