

realised, however, could scarcely be said to be sufficiently satisfactory to cover the extra cost incurred with the shipment. The result of the other trial shipment unfortunately proved a total loss to shippers. The condition under which the meat was treated could hardly be said to afford a fair test for chilled beef. The length of voyage was fifty-nine days, which was excessive for the attempt.

The low price that has ruled for Argentine chilled beef, as compared with that for frozen beef, throughout the year has not been encouraging for the prosecution of experiments in the shipments of chilled beef from New Zealand.

LAMB-SHIPMENTS.

During the year one or two shipments of lamb, made on account of the Department of Agriculture from the Government farms, have been received and dealt with by this Department. They have been sold on the market here, and reports concerning them have been supplied to the Department at Wellington.

FROZEN-PRODUCE EXHIBITS.

I am pleased to report having been able to make an arrangement last summer with the Linde British Refrigerating Company (Limited), by which a good advertisement for New Zealand meat and dairy-produce was secured. At the Naval and Shipping Exhibition at Earl's Court the Linde British Refrigerating Company (Limited) had an exhibit of refrigerating plant, with cold-air chamber and chilled-room. In conversation with the manager I pointed out to him the great advantage that would be derived if the chambers were filled with articles which would clearly demonstrate to visitors to the Exhibition the uses for which the chambers were intended. My suggestion that it would be advantageous if the cold-air chamber was filled with meat, dairy-produce, &c., was agreed to, and I was granted the use of the cold-air chamber for the display of such New Zealand produce as I cared to put in. The Colonial Consignment and Distributing Company (Limited) kindly consented to supply me with carcasses of mutton and lamb. Butter I obtained from a dairy-produce merchant dealing in New Zealand produce. Part of the shipment of poultry forwarded from the colony for the Colonial Exhibition at the Crystal Palace I sent to Earl's Court. With these I succeeded in making a very neat and effective display.

I took the opportunity of distributing there numerous pamphlets treating on New Zealand mutton and lamb, and I was pleased to note, from inquiries received both verbally and by letter concerning New Zealand produce, that they did a considerable amount of good. It was evident that interest in New Zealand produce was taken by persons into whose hands the literature fell.

SMITHFIELD MARKET BY-LAWS.

I have already reported concerning the proposed alteration in the Smithfield Market by-laws, by which the Corporation of London attempted to obtain from the Board of Trade permission to revise the Central Market by-laws in a manner that would have proved hurtful to the interests of all engaged in the New Zealand meat trade. The matter was taken up and protests made to the Board of Trade concerning it. As the result of these protests it was understood that the Board of Trade had resolved to hold an inquiry into the whole matter. During the year, however, I was informed that the Board, at the request of the Corporation, had postponed the proposed inquiry.

It was expected that the London Corporation were to raise a test case during the year by prosecuting the Christchurch Meat Company (Limited) for selling a parcel of New Zealand meat within the precincts of Smithfield Meat-market to a client who is not a client of the Corporation therein. A case such as this would have been one in which very great interest would have been taken by all concerned in the frozen-meat trade, as on the decision of it important issues rested.

Nothing further, however, has been done in the matter, and I believe that the intention to prosecute has been abandoned. At present the by-laws remain as they formerly were.

POULTRY-SHIPMENTS.

Some trial shipments of poultry have during the year been placed on the London market. These arrived in excellent condition, and have met a ready sale at good prices. Both ducklings and chickens have been received, and each has been favourably commented on by those engaged in the poultry trade here. The best time of the year for ducklings to arrive in London is during the months of March, April, and May. About Christmas, or earlier than these months, is not so good. Towards Easter the demand is at its best, and prices are then highest. Naturally, prices vary according to the season. Ducklings from four to six months old, and weighing from 4 lb. to 5½ lb. each, are most suitable for the London market. If properly fattened and packed, and carefully frozen and handled, there should be no fear of obtaining other than satisfactory prices for ducklings arriving from New Zealand on the London market during the months specified.

Chickens meet a ready market for a longer period than do ducklings. For chickens, such as those referred to as being received from New Zealand, there is always a good market in this country, and prices are likely to be remunerative.

FEATHERS.

Several shipments of feathers have been received from the Department of Agriculture at Wellington during the year. These have been handled and sold at auction under my supervision. Being a new line in the colony's export this was considered the best means of getting them introduced to buyers, who have expressed satisfaction with the quality of the lots offered. Good competition for any further parcels that may be sent forward may now, I believe, be relied upon. The prices made have been good, white ducks' feathers having realised up to 1s. 5¾d., brown ducks' feathers 1s. 1¾d., and fowls' feathers from 2¾d. to 4½d. per pound.