

1907.

NEW ZEALAND.

## INDUSTRIES AND COMMERCE

(SIXTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF).

BY THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRIES AND COMMERCE, HON. JAMES MCGOWAN.

*Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.*

MY LORD,—

Department of Industries and Commerce, Wellington, 6th August, 1907.

I have the honour to submit to Your Excellency the report of the Department of Industries and Commerce for the year ending the 31st March, 1907.

I have, &amp;c.,

J. MCGOWAN,

Minister of Industries and Commerce.

His Excellency the Governor of New Zealand.

IN presenting the sixth annual statement it becomes my pleasure to again direct attention to the advance made during the past year in trade and commerce. Not only have the prices ruling for goods exported been on the whole considerably higher than for many years past, but a yet more pleasing feature has been the substantial increase in the volume of exports, nearly all the important lines being considerably improved, indicating that a great advance has been made in the development of the country. This feature is of more than usual interest, because the previous year showed no such advance. On the other hand, there was a decrease in some of the important export lines during the year 1905-6. The products showing the greatest increase are wool, lamb, mutton, beef, preserved meats, sheep and rabbit skins, tallow, butter, cheese, hemp, and gold, the total increased value being £3,532,260. Against this there has been a very large decrease in the export of wheat, and to a lesser degree in oats, seeds, kauri-gum, timber, &c., totalling in value £267,470.

The total exports for the year are valued at £19,532,119, as against £16,267,329 for 1905-6, showing an increase of £3,264,790, or 20·7 per cent.—an advance upon which the country is to be congratulated.

The value of imports for 1906-7 amounted to £15,323,127, as against £13,186,081 for the previous year, showing an increase of £2,137,046.

Although there has been evidence of a weakening tendency in the price of wool during the closing months of the year, particularly in the coarser grades, I do not anticipate that the coming season's output of produce generally will find a less ready market than that of the past season, and I feel that there are good grounds for presuming that the prices on the whole will not be materially less.

In view of the keen competition experienced in the markets of Great Britain, advantage has been freely taken of opportunities to keep the products of New Zealand before the merchants and consumers of the country which provides us with our most regular and stable market. Reports go to show that year by year our products are becoming more firmly established and more widely distributed. There is, however, room, in my opinion, for more systematic and energetic work in making known the products of this country in Great Britain. Any step taken in this direction means the strengthening of the commercial staff in London. The officer at present employed has his hands very full. It cannot be expected that one officer can carry on effectively work of such magnitude as supervising the arrival and distribution of our various lines of produce, and at the same time take upon himself the still greater task of opening up fresh channels of trade in the different centres.

I am convinced that many merchants who do not at the present time handle our products would become buyers if the value of and facilities for obtaining regular supplies of our goods could be demonstrated to them.