

It is understood that when the Australian tenders were opened it was found that the price asked was in excess of previous quotations received, and the authorities decided to send Major H. J. Gallagher, of the United States army, to New Zealand to make inquiries in this market as to supplies, prices, and possible shipping facilities before accepting any tender.

On Major Gallagher's arrival in Wellington full information was afforded him on the subject of his mission. He visited the larger refrigerating-works, and expressed his great satisfaction at the methods of slaughtering and Government inspection adopted in New Zealand. Owing to the season being so advanced, and the short supply of beef available, no company was in the position to quote for the quantity of beef required by the U.S. army—viz., 2,000 tons—but it is hoped (should reasonable freights be quoted) that the American authorities will be in this market from October to March, when a further outlet for surplus supplies would prove beneficial to the beef trade here.

Samples and quotations of New Zealand oats and fodder were supplied to Major Gallagher, but, as local quotations are likely to rule high for some time to come, it is unlikely that immediate business will result.

Speaking generally of the Philippine Islands, the officer said that political conditions are in a tranquil state and business flourishing.

BOARD OF TRADE INQUIRIES.

In connection with my appointment as Official Corresponding Secretary for the Commercial Intelligence Branch of the British Board of Trade, I am in receipt of a large amount of inquiries on commercial questions.

It is worthy of note that there is a disposition on the part of British manufacturers to extend their trade to New Zealand, and every assistance is given by the Department to inquirers who ask for information relating to trade, shipping, Customs duties, &c.

During the year local correspondents were appointed by the Board of Trade at Wellington, Auckland, and Dunedin, to report on matters affecting trade in their particular province. Matters of larger importance are, however, referred to me direct.

Full particulars of the export and import trade of New Zealand are forwarded to the Board of Trade at regular intervals.

CHICAGO AGENCY.

Satisfactory arrangements have been made with the British Consul in Chicago to exhibit samples of New Zealand products and manufactures, and also to answer inquiries relative to these. It is hoped that this agency will assist in the development of our export trade, and with this object in view various samples have been forwarded to Chicago, consisting of grain, grass-seeds, peas, beans, kauri-gum, woollen goods, and hemp. A plentiful supply of commercial literature and pictures accompanied the samples to assist the Consul in his work in connection with the agency. There is no salary attached to the position, the Department paying only actual expenses incurred for shipping-charges, and also incidentals in Chicago.

AUSTRALIAN AGENCIES.

In conjunction with the Department of Tourist and Health Resorts, agencies were opened in Sydney and Melbourne in June, 1906. Regular reports are received from the Government agents relating to the trade and commerce of the Commonwealth, together with particulars of tenders called for by foreign countries, which are not always available in New Zealand, but in which this country might participate.

Attractive samples of New Zealand products are displayed at both agencies, consisting of wheat, oats, peas, beans, barley, grass-seeds, hops, hemp, timber, and woollen goods, which greatly assist the agents when giving information regarding the productiveness of New Zealand.

Following are some extracts from the reports of these agents.

The Government Agent in Sydney writes,—

"That the agency has proved of value in a commercial sense is indorsed by the numerous daily inquiries made by business people concerning Customs tariff, trades and callings of the people, and sizes, together with population, of the New Zealand towns.

"Whenever practicable I have obtained copies of conditions and specifications relative to tenders received in New South Wales forwarded by its commercial representatives abroad. A few days ago I also forwarded to the Industries and Commerce Department particulars of a big meat contract for the American forces in the Philippines, and of which little publicity was given in Sydney. A report was also furnished of a proposal submitted by cotton-growers at the New Hebrides by which New Zealand might with advantage take regular supplies of this commodity.

"I have taken every opportunity of bringing under the notice of furniture-manufacturers and others the excellence of New Zealand woods for high-class furniture."

The following is from the Melbourne Agency:—

"Trade.

"Every opportunity is taken of promoting commercial interests between New Zealand and this State, and as time proceeds I believe, by devoting special attention to this branch of the Department, we shall be able to improve the present state of affairs *re* commercial matters.