

is very well known that our butter, cheese, and meat are fraudulently sold in very large quantities as the produce of Great Britain, Ireland, or other countries; and money expended in checking such practices would, in my opinion, be well spent.

TRADE WITH WESTERN PORTS OF GREAT BRITAIN.

There still remains a very large field for the extension of our markets, which can be reached through the western ports of Great Britain, and if developed would insure greater competition for our products. The two essentials for developing these markets are a dissemination of the knowledge of the value of our produce and a more frequent and more regular steam service. The service now running to the western ports, which a few years ago was initiated under arrangement with the New Zealand Government, has done much to give the Dominion's produce a footing in the districts fed through those ports, but the possibilities of increasing trade would be still greatly improved if regular time-tabled arrivals of the steamers engaged in this service could be secured. Taking into consideration the impediments to merchants caused by the uncertainty as to dates, the service has been exceedingly well patronised by shippers.

I would recommend that efforts be made to secure, if possible, a more frequent and speedy service, which is necessary to give our produce a chance to compete on equal terms with that entering the western ports of Great Britain from other sources.

The directors of the great dock companies of the west coast are now realising that the New Zealand trade is an important factor, and are endeavouring to secure a fair proportion of the tonnage travelling between New Zealand and Great Britain, and *vice versa*. The directors of the Manchester Ship Canal have a permanent resident agent in New Zealand, who is in regular communication with shippers regarding the facilities offered by the Port of Manchester for the rapid handling and distribution of produce in the northern and midland counties of England.

The Bristol Corporation also deputed Mr. W. J. Kent to visit New Zealand with the object of bringing before those interested the claims of Avonmouth to a share of the Dominion's trade. This gentleman brought letters of introduction to the Government, and every assistance in the prosecution of his inquiries was given him by the Department. Mr. Kent has now returned to Bristol to report on his mission. Before leaving the Dominion he expressed his satisfaction at the manner in which he had been received by Chambers of Commerce, merchants, and shippers, and his thanks to the Department for the information and services vouchsafed him. The various dock companies are desirous of obtaining a share of the west-coast trade. The following is a list of the steamers engaged in the service, together with their tonnage and refrigerator-capacity:—

| Steamer. | Carrying-capacity (Tons). | Carrying-capacity (Carcases of Mutton). |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| Cornwall | 9,000 | 83,000 |
| Devon | 9,000 | 83,000 |
| Drayton Grange | 10,500 | 84,100 |
| Fifeshire | 9,000 | 110,000 |
| Morayshire | 9,000 | 110,000 |
| Nairnshire | 9,000 | 110,000 |
| Norfolk | 9,000 | 89,900 |
| Oswestry Grange | 10,500 | 84,000 |
| Ripplingham Grange | 9,000 | 80,000 |
| Surrey | 9,000 | 83,800 |
| Sussex | 9,000 | 80,600 |
| Thorpe Grange | 10,500 | 90,000 |

TRADE WITH AUSTRALIA.

Trade between New Zealand and Australia is, of course, restricted by the Customs tariff now in force, and the similarity of the products of these two countries. It is satisfactory to note, however, that, although the volume of business passing between us is not as large as could be desired, there is a regular interchange of trade. New Zealand lately has been shipping oats to Australia in fair-sized parcels, and large shipments of Australian flour have reached the Dominion, notwithstanding the duty of 1s. per cental. The importation of flour from Australia is largely accounted for by the high rates ruling in New Zealand for milling-wheat, holders here being firm in their ideas regarding value, and inclined to hold on rather than sell at prices offered by millers.

| | | |
|---|------------|-----------|
| Exports from New Zealand to Australia, year ended 31st December, 1907 | £ | 2,564,236 |
| Imports from Australia to New Zealand, year ended 31st December, 1907,— | | |
| Australian produce | £1,543,692 | |
| Other than Australian | 1,021,329 | |
| | | 2,565,021 |
| Difference in favour of Australia on total shipments | | 785 |
| Or, deducting imports of other than Australian origin,— | | |
| Exports of New Zealand produce to Australia | | 2,564,236 |
| Imports of Australian produce to New Zealand | | 1,543,692 |
| | | 1,020,544 |
| The figures for the year ending 31st December, 1906, were as follows: | | |
| Exports from New Zealand to Australia | | 2,156,489 |
| Imports from Australia to New Zealand | | 2,391,767 |
| | | 764,722 |