

REPORT.

INTRODUCTORY: THE NEW ZEALAND MARKET.

THE Dominion of New Zealand, which extends over a territory which, inclusive of the small dependent islands in the Pacific Ocean, amounts to 104,531 square miles, or almost precisely twice the area of England and Wales, with an estimated population at the close of the year 1906 of 908,726 persons (exclusive of about 48,000 Maoris and some 12,000 inhabitants of the Cook and other Pacific islands), is at present enjoying a period of rapid economic development and of great and general prosperity. The population has steadily advanced in numbers, at a somewhat increasing rate of progress; between 1895 and 1900 the increase was a little less than 10 per cent., and in the ensuing quinquennial period it was nearly 15 per cent., whilst the estimated actual growth in 1906 (26,264) was the largest yet recorded for any single year in the history of the colony since 1879. It is noteworthy that the part of the recent increase of population which has been due to immigration has been derived almost entirely from the United Kingdom and Australia.

The amount of land under cultivation was 8,462,495 acres in 1890, and 14,114,925 acres in 1905. The number of separately occupied and cultivated holdings of over 1 acre in extent rose from 38,083 in the former to 69,942 in the latter year; of this total, 19,787 holdings were of 10 acres or less, 11,745 of 11 to 50 acres, 7,562 of 51 to 100 acres, and 9,950 of 101 to 200 acres, whilst only 4,398 were of more than 1,000 acres. Thus agriculture in one form or another is, and must long remain, the predominant interest of New Zealand, but at the same time industries have been established and strenuous and persistent efforts are being made to develop them, both by the tariff policy of the Dominion and by other forms of Government aid and encouragement. The number of persons employed in "industrial enterprises" increased from 27,389 (including 2,969 females) in 1896 to 40,806 (including 6,253 females) ten years later, whilst the value of the output (including repairs) advanced in the same period from £9,549,360 to £22,422,736; and, although, owing to certain changes in the Census definition of a "factory," the figures for the two years are not strictly comparable, they are sufficiently so to indicate the extent of New Zealand's industrial progress. Mining activity is confined chiefly to coal and gold. The output of the former rose from 637,397 tons in 1890 to 1,585,756 tons in 1905, and during the same period the export of gold produced in New Zealand, which, however, fluctuated considerably, rose from 187,641 oz. to 520,485 oz.—the advance since 1900 having been particularly marked. The total number of persons engaged in gold-mining in 1905 was 9,362, and in coal-mining 3,269.

The statistics of foreign trade show the same upward movement, and indicate substantial progress in the general well-being of the Dominion, as the growth of trade has been far more rapid in recent years than the increase in population; in particular there was a notable development in imports and exports in 1906.

The following table shows the population, imports, exports, and total trade (exclusive of specie) at five-year intervals since 1890, and for the year 1906:—

Year.	Population on 31st December (exclusive of Maoris and Inhabitants of Pacific Islands).	Imports.*	Exports.*	Total Trade.*
		£	£	£
1890	625,508	5,928,895	9,569,316	15,498,211
1895	698,706	6,115,953	8,518,119	14,634,072
1900	768,278	10,207,326	13,223,258	23,430,584
1905	882,462	12,481,178	15,642,069	28,123,247
1906	908,726	14,303,170	17,972,480	32,275,650

* Exclusive of specie.

It will be seen from this that, whilst between 1890 and 1906 the estimated population advanced by about 45 per cent., the total foreign trade of the Dominion (exclusive of specie) increased in value by 108 per cent., the rise in imports alone being 141 per cent. and in exports alone 88 per cent.—the relatively great expansion of imports testifying to the increased purchasing-power of the community.

The following table shows the imports, exports, and total trade (exclusive of specie) per head of population for the same years:—

Year.	Imports*	Exports*	Total Trade*
	per Head of Mean Population (excluding Maoris).		
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
1890	9 11 0	15 8 4	24 19 4
1895	8 16 8	12 6 0	21 2 8
1900	13 7 4	17 6 4	30 13 8
1905	14 6 11	17 19 7	32 6 6
1906	15 19 5	20 1 9	36 1 2

* Excluding specie.