

will in constantly increasing degree displace Canadian in the market. Among other products for which there is a market in Bristol, hemp, grain, and timber may be mentioned. These, as well as the staple products already referred to, can be advantageously supplied to Cardiff from Avonmouth Dock; and, as it is inexpedient for the steamers to call at more than one port in the Bristol Channel, everything points to Bristol as being the best port of call. Our products have obtained a high reputation in that city, and command rather better prices there than elsewhere, so it is clearly in the interest of our producers that the Bristol connection should be continued and enlarged.

As between Liverpool and Manchester, the older port at present does much the larger share of the import trade from New Zealand, while Manchester sends us larger return cargoes. Liverpool's ascendancy in the matter of imports is solely due to the tendency of trade to flow in accustomed channels, and to the fact of large importing businesses being established in that city, with wide connection and fully developed organizations for distribution. For the trade in foodstuffs, Manchester offers infinitely superior dock, storage, and railway facilities, and the charges are generally lower, while as a centre for distribution it is far ahead of Liverpool. There is a population of ten million souls within the area of distribution claimed for Manchester; but this area in some parts overlaps that embraced in the Bristol area. Even making allowance for this, Manchester is undoubtedly the most convenient port in the north of England to serve a vast industrial population which largely consumes imported foodstuffs. The Liverpool harbour and dock authorities have their hands fully occupied in making provision for the general trade of the port, and will not exert themselves to supply storage and handling facilities for perishable cargoes. Manchester, on the other hand, is splendidly equipped with sheds, refrigerated stores, and handling-appliances of the most approved design. It has the good fortune to be a new port, and is not, like its older rival, hampered by having sheds and appliances of antiquated structure, nor does it labour under the disadvantage of having its docks cut off from railway communication. Whereas in Liverpool our foodstuffs have to be unloaded, reloaded, and carted to stores or railway-stations under most damaging conditions, the facilities at Manchester are all that can be desired. Unloading is conducted at Manchester under cover, into insulated transit-sheds and railway-trucks, as at Avonmouth; there are spacious cold-stores at the docks, where meat, butter, and cheese can be safely kept at low rates of storage; and the Corporation Cold-stores, immediately adjacent to the meat-market, are also commodious and convenient. The fact that so small a portion of the meat and dairy-produce trade has been diverted to Manchester in the thirteen years that have elapsed since the opening of the Ship Canal has led some people to conclude that Manchester merchants are deficient in enterprise and organizing capacity; but this assumption is altogether unwarranted. If we take a new line of trade, like that in bananas, for instance, it can be easily seen that Manchester has no lack of business acumen and enterprise. Last year Manchester imported 2,583,000 bunches of bananas, against Bristol's 1,450,000, and Liverpool's 1,250,000—proportions which, by the way, fairly represent the relative importance of these several cities as centres for the distribution of foodstuffs. From the way in which Manchester has come to the front in this trade, it is a reasonable deduction that, given equal conditions, she would have done equally well in other lines. But the conservatism of trade-methods in England is difficult to overcome, and so, despite the superior advantages of Manchester as a port and centre of distribution, she has made but little progress in the establishment of an important trade in meat and dairy-produce. In grain and timber Manchester has done much better, the facilities offered being sufficient to overcome trade prejudices. As a port for the reception of wool and cotton Manchester has many advantages over London and Liverpool respectively; yet she has been able to divert but a small portion of the import trade in these raw materials. In time, however, Manchester's superiority in the matter of port and transit facilities must tell. She is nearer to the consuming centres; and, being thus able to offer the lowest through rates by rail or canal to the Midlands or north of England, traders cannot always pursue a policy that involves them in large annual losses of legitimate profits. It should be the steady aim of the New Zealand Government and those interested in the export trade to encourage shipments to Manchester, because of the advantages that accrue for obtaining return cargoes of cotton goods and general merchandise at low rates of freight from that port.

Glasgow, the great Scottish port, has not received that attention which it deserves as a centre for the consumption and distribution of New Zealand products, more especially mutton, lamb, butter, and cheese. The first direct shipment of frozen meat received at Glasgow was by the s.s. "Delphic," from New Zealand, early in 1904—Argentine importations following later in the year. The s.s. "Suffolk," of the Federal-Houlder-Shire Line, took a considerable quantity of New Zealand frozen meat to Glasgow in August of the same year; but the trade has not developed in a degree commensurate with the promise given by those early shipments. This is largely due to the fact of Glasgow being the last port of call of the west-coast steamers, whose journey there from New Zealand occupies about nine weeks; but it is in a greater degree due to the irregularity of the sailings. As regards the cheese and butter trade, the length of the voyage is a fatal obstacle, as, owing to fluctuations in the market, it is of the greatest importance to have regular and frequent deliveries. The position of Glasgow as a large centre of population, and as a trade emporium for the greater part of Scotland, gives it great potentialities as a market for New Zealand produce; and in any improvement or rearrangement of the steamer service its claims should have careful attention. Our meat, butter, and cheese have won a high reputation in Scotland, and it only requires a better steamboat service to insure an enormous increase in the trade. Hemp, grain, seeds, and timber are among the products that find a ready market in Glasgow; and to increase the trade in these requires nothing more than enterprise on the part of exporters. It is difficult to see how a direct trade in dairy-produce can be developed with Glasgow, unless steamers could be run fortnightly in the season; but the connection would prove so valuable that it is well worth while making an effort to provide an improved steamer service.