

should have been delivered in Bristol last Christmas were not received till the February following. The steamer did not call at Avonmouth, but went on to Glasgow, and finally to London, whence the goods were forwarded to Bristol. He would never ship through Avonmouth again, unless things were greatly improved. What would satisfy him would be an agreement between the New Zealand Government and the Federal Company for the regular despatch of steamers from the colony, leaving not later than the middle of each month, and the owners not being at liberty to vary the route and call at different ports before putting into Avonmouth. Further, the line should be forbidden to give bills of lading bearing the previous month's date to that on which the steamer sailed. Exporters in the United States and Canada used to get shipowners to sign bills of lading for past dates, and the practice nearly killed some of the American trade; but the whole thing was exposed and put right. The system in vogue in the west-coast service must be altered, or New Zealand producers will suffer as well as the merchants in Britain. There were, he alleged, rebates given in the New Zealand and South African trade, and the New Zealand Parliament ought to pass a law to put a stop to this practice. Finally he said, "All the dock facilities, rapid handling, and cheap transit at Avonmouth count for nothing unless we can have a regular and fairly rapid line of steamers from New Zealand—say, monthly steamers, making the voyage in forty-six days."

The principal of another large Bristol house, speaking with regard to the west-coast service, suggested that it might be a good thing to have smaller vessels, sailing more frequently and calling at fewer ports. It would make all the difference if merchants knew that a steamer would arrive about a certain date every month. He was opposed to the New Zealand system of the dairy factories making contract for the whole season's output. This method of dealing, he said, is nothing else than a huge gamble, and in nine cases out of ten it causes loss to the purchaser, on account of competition being so keen. What is required is a system of weekly or fortnightly sales. This would be equitable, would establish pleasant relations between buyer and seller, and would ultimately prove beneficial to the New Zealand producer. Three or four years ago Bristol was able to take 10,000 boxes of butter per month. As regards cheese, Canadian is preferred before New Zealand, though it costs 2s. to 3s. per hundredweight more. New Zealand cheese arrives at a time when heavy stocks of Canadian are held, and if the price is high merchants are very chary about entering into contracts with New Zealand producers. What he would like is consignment on sale, about a week before the sailing of the steamer. If that system were adopted they could take a large quantity of New Zealand cheese by each steamer. If trading conditions were improved in this way, the sale of New Zealand butter and cheese would be greatly increased. He admitted that 99 per cent. of Canadian cheese is sold straight out, the same as New Zealand, and he stated that the consumption of New Zealand cheese in Bristol is only one-twelfth of Canadian.

Frozen Meat.—A gentleman largely interested in the importation of New Zealand meat said that, beyond all doubt, mutton and lamb could be landed in Bristol direct much more cheaply and expeditiously than through London. He found, however, that in his efforts to develop the trade he was being continually humbugged and harrassed by the London office—these tactics being part of a plan to concentrate business in London. He said that produce is frequently delivered in Bristol stores a day after the arrival at Avonmouth of the steamer conveying it, whereas it sometimes takes fourteen days to obtain delivery of goods landed at London. The rapidity of despatch at Avonmouth more than compensates for the slower passage of the west-coast steamers.

Other Bristol dealers in colonial produce whom I interviewed expressed views practically identical with those in the preceding paragraphs.

III. CARDIFF.

ITS TRADE AND PORT FACILITIES.

Cardiff, the capital of Glamorganshire, situated on the River Taff about two miles from where it enters the Bristol Channel, is a city of some importance, having, with its suburbs, a population of about 200,000. Although it has a history extending back for more than a thousand years, its population at the beginning of the nineteenth century was only about two thousand. The development of the city has been contemporaneous with the working of the splendid coal-deposits in the neighbourhood, and the construction of the harbour-works. Being less than thirty miles distant from Bristol in a straight line, and in direct communication with it by water and land, Cardiff is greatly handicapped in its efforts to become a distributing centre for foodstuffs, or even a port of call for oversea steamers conveying colonial produce to the Home markets. Despite the enterprise of merchants, and the excellent facilities provided by the dock authorities and railway companies, Cardiff's trade in the matter of imports is in the main local, and is likely to continue so. Although, at present, direct trade with New Zealand is hardly likely to grow, some particulars of the facilities at Cardiff for the reception and distribution of foodstuffs will not be without interest.

Cardiff claims to be the natural ocean port for the supply of a population of about four millions, a large proportion of whom are engaged in coal-mining, iron-working, and tin-plate manufacture—a class consuming large quantities of meat and dairy-produce. A plan prepared by the Cardiff Railway Company states the population in various radii to be:—

Within 30 miles of Cardiff (including Bristol)	...	...	...	1,127,828
„ 60 miles of Cardiff	...	...	...	1,895,298
„ 90 „	...	...	...	3,776,721

According to statistics published four years ago, Cardiff imported annually about 300,000 tons of foodstuffs, and it is estimated that the consumption of butter in the Cardiff district amounts to 200,000 boxes per week, and of cheese about 6,000 boxes. The annual import of apples reaches the handsome total of 100,000 barrels. Most of these goods reach Cardiff by coasting vessels from London, Liverpool, Bristol, and Glasgow, and some by rail from London. Practically no outside foodstuffs reach the port direct, except Argentine frozen mutton and some Canadian produce. The