

*Butter.*—Generally speaking, satisfaction has been expressed with the butter placed on the London market during the year, with the one exception of a tendency to unduly increase the moisture content that has been observed in some factories. The average price realised for New Zealand choicest butter has been higher than any hitherto recorded, being 112s. per hundredweight. It reached a much higher figure than this during a period of excitement the previous year, but the average of that year was 111s. per hundredweight. The butter exported reached the very large value of £1,422,198, an increase of £83,805 compared with the previous year.

In connection with butter, it seems to me that on one point our exporters might take a lesson from Denmark and the Netherlands. These countries export all or practically all their first-grade butter under a National brand, a brand which is a guarantee of a standard quality. Once a purchaser obtains an article which meets his favour, it is the brand he buys. This, of course, is a general trade practice. Every factory in New Zealand at present exports under a separate brand, and, as our butter is widely distributed, a buyer has little opportunity of getting butter from the same factory several years in succession. Therefore our branding system has not the value it should have from the most desirable point of view—that of forming an index to the purchaser. A National brand can, of course, only be of real value when there is uniformity of quality in the article exported bearing the brand.

*Cheese* has met with a good inquiry throughout the year. Prices were in favour of white kinds during the first six months, but from November to March coloured held pride of place, the closing quotations being 61s. and 64s. per hundredweight respectively. The export increased by 27,412 cwt., valued at £73,138, compared with the previous year, and the total value of the cheese exported amounted to £865,456. The improvement in quality and flavour over the output for the previous year was very noticeable, and was to a large extent due to the higher range of temperature maintained in the cheese-chambers on board the ships during the voyage, which is found to assist the curing process materially.

*Hemp.*—New Zealand hemp has had to face a falling market practically throughout the whole year. Opening at £25 10s. and £23 10s. respectively for Good Fair and Fair grades, the close of the year saw the price down to £23 and £21 respectively, at which figures very few mills can be run at a profit. The export was only valued at £310,364, which is £376,233 less than the value of the exports during the previous year. The depression is chiefly due to the exceptionally heavy output of manila fibre.

*Tow.*—The export of tow has fallen away in sympathy with the decreased output of hemp. The market value has also dropped. The export shows a decrease of 2,353 tons, and is £32,625 less in value than that of the previous year.

*Potatoes.*—The export of potatoes was very small, but was 133 tons more than the previous year, and £670 more in value.

*Chaff, Hay, and Straw* show a large increase, being no less than 13,096 tons and £65,683 in value in excess of the previous year's figures.

*Fish and Oysters.*—The export of these commodities is steadily increasing, and they find a ready market in Australia, notwithstanding the duty. 2,368 pounds' worth in excess of last year's figures were dealt with.

*Timber.*—80,795,532 sup. ft. of timber left New Zealand during the year. With the exception of small quantities to the various Pacific islands, and about 3,000,000 sup. ft. to Great Britain, practically the whole export went to the various Australian Colonies, where, despite competition from Asiatic and American lumber, our produce holds a steady market.

*Kauri-gum.*—Exports show a decrease of 580 tons and £66,664 in value compared with the previous year. The market has been quiet, opening with 160s. for ordinary to fair three-quarters scraped, and 47s. 6d. for brown pickings, common to good, in April, 1908, and closing at 165s. and 55s. respectively in March, 1909, for the same qualities.

*Gold.*—The export of gold shows a decrease of 34,649 oz.

*Silver.*—The export of silver shows a steady increase for the year, the value in excess of the previous year being £24,442.

*Coal.*—The export of coal shows a small decrease for the year. The quantity mined was somewhat smaller than last year, and the local demand did not leave much surplus available for export.

*Mineral.*—The quantities of other minerals generally show small decreases on the last year's figures.

*Wheat.*—A very small quantity of wheat was exported. It was, however, valued at £231 above the previous year's figures.

*Oats* were in good supply, and met a firm demand in New South Wales; consequently, the export figures show a large increase on the previous year's—viz., 1,063,702 bushels, and £123,012 in value.

*Barley, Beans, Peas, Bran and Pollard, Grass and Clover Seeds, Flour.*—Generally speaking, the export of these commodities has been less than in the previous year, with values correspondingly lower.

*Hops.*—The quantity exported was 1,561 cwt. less than during the previous year, and the value also shows a decrease of £5,858.

#### EXPORT OF MINERAL ORES, ETC.

Under this heading the total export for the year ending 31st March, 1909, was 1,691 tons, valued at £10,251. The following particulars in respect to the prices obtained in London markets for wolfram, scheelite, and antimony ore are supplied to the Department by Messrs. G. Blackwell Sons, and Co. (Limited), London, and no doubt are of interest to those engaged in this industry :—