

and the fruit on the whole is not so large as in a season with an abundant rainfall ; but my anticipations have been exceeded in regard to this collection, and the growers have helped me most generously."

An exhibit of bottled fruit was also sent, and sixty-eight bottles of honey prepared by the Government Apiarist. There were numerous varieties of the latter, and the whole was shown in handsome glass-stoppered bottles, and got up in a very attractive manner.

The apples and pears exhibited by the New Zealand Government were awarded a gold medal, the highest award obtainable at the show. The other New Zealand exhibitors to obtain awards were Mr. Blakeway, Christchurch, Silver Banksian Medal, for his exhibit of apples ; and Messrs. Clarke Bros., Whangarei, Silver Knightian Medal, for their exhibit of preserved fruits.

#### ROYAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY'S SHOW FOR HOME AND COLONIAL FRUIT.

This show was held during the last week in November, 1908, and a very creditable exhibit of New Zealand fruits was made. The apples which were received from the Department of Agriculture, and shown at the Horticultural Society's June function and then at the Franco-British Exhibition, were again made use of, having of course during this period of six months been kept in cold-store. This exhibit was again successful, and secured a silver medal. The exhibit was especially interesting as showing the condition in which New Zealand apples could be placed on the Home market nine months after being gathered in New Zealand.

#### NEW ZEALAND GOVERNMENT AGENTS IN AUSTRALIA.

In conjunction with their duties as Government Agents of the Department of Tourist and Health Resorts, the officers in charge of the Sydney and Melbourne branches have answered or forwarded to Head Office for action many inquiries relating to the industries and commerce of the Dominion. The Sydney Agent in his report states,—

The year just closed marks the third year of the agency's establishment, and to-day its presence is widely known and appreciated. It has been instrumental in facilitating trade relations and protecting the Dominion's commerce, and in many ways proving a direct boon to mercantile houses. Not a day passes without some inquiries being made regarding Customs tariff, &c., whilst the display of New Zealand products has proved an effective advertisement. During the year several instances of unscrupulous trading were investigated, and each investigation was attended with satisfactory results. In one case a George Street tradesman exposed for sale parcels of goods said to be of New Zealand origin. These mainly comprised alleged flannel goods, and were ticketed as of New Zealand production. Close examination showed conclusively that these articles were "shoddy," and several experts to whom the goods were submitted pronounced them as being all cotton. Upon representation being made, the shopkeeper, somewhat alarmed, immediately withdrew the misleading card, and accepted a caution regarding any further display on similar lines.

Special attention has been paid to the exhibits displayed at the agency, and the grain-samples, woollen goods, timbers, &c., attract considerable attention. Their presence adds materially to the appearance of the office, and the fine samples of rugs shown by the Kaiapoi and Mosgiel companies bring in a lot of visitors. The excellent market reports shown each mail in the weekly newspapers are also keenly appreciated, and prove of great assistance.

*Market for New Zealand Fish.*—Sydney offers a splendid market for the sale of New Zealand fish, and the current prices admit of an ample margin of profit. At present fish-supplies are somewhat erratic, and do not satisfy the demand, whilst it has been successfully demonstrated that fish from the Dominion can be landed in a good state of preservation, and sold at a figure satisfactory alike to the public and retailer. Recently a Wellington fish-merchant, with a view of testing the market, brought across a consignment of 300 cases, and disposed of the lot at the public fish-market. This, however, does not really test the possibilities, for the simple reason that the auctioneering of fish takes place at too early an hour for the housewife to make her purchases, and the sale is therefore confined to middlemen. What is really required is for some interested persons to secure a shop and depot in a principal thoroughfare, and sell direct to the public. The duty on fish is 1d. per pound, freight ½d., and another ½d. is estimated to cover incidental charges. Recent advices point to the fact that several New Zealand firms are making inquiries with a view to participating in the trade.

#### The Melbourne Agent reports,—

During the year trade concerns of every description have been carefully watched, with the hope of seeing if openings could be made for New Zealand's raw products and goods ; but the avenues presented have unfortunately been very limited, owing to the tariff barrier. The tariff restrictions are accentuated by the Dominion's commodities having to compete against unequal conditions. The preference granted to the Mother-country is not conceded to our articles of export, thus placing us in line with foreign competitors. An instance : A prominent Melbourne retail house handling New Zealand rugs informs me that, though they stock a few, they do not push them, as it does not pay to do so. These rugs cost 50 per cent. to land, and, being of high-grade and expensive goods in the first place, the addition of such importation charges places them beyond the reach of the majority of people. The manager of the house referred to tells me that, when recently taking stock he noticed they were carrying only twenty New Zealand rugs as against a thousand imported from Great Britain. The reputation of the former, however, is such that a few are stocked, as some customers cannot, even with the greatest persuasion, be induced to purchase any others. Further restrictions exist in regard to the more successful sale of this article, caused by the number of hands through which it has to pass before reaching the consumer ; the remedy for this appears to lie in the hands of the New Zealand manufacturers themselves.