

During the year a display of woollen goods from the Kaiapoi, Mosgiel, and Wellington Woollen-mills has been made an additional feature of our main office, and numerous inquiries as to where the goods are procurable locally have resulted. These and other inquiries of a like nature have more than ever convinced me that it is advisable for New Zealand manufacturers to appoint a central agent in this city, where our manufactures would be readily obtainable at all times; or, at any rate, where goods might be ordered from sample, as, owing to the variety of the requirements of would-be customers, it is often impossible for us to give the necessary information. In this connection the Denton Hat-mills have opened up an agency in Dunedin for their goods, and through our instrumentality they have arranged with a firm to ship them New Zealand rabbit-skins for use in the manufacture of their goods.

There has been an improvement in the quantity and value of Dominion products coming into Victoria—noticeably in the following commodities: Hemp, fish, coal, tinned meat, skins, hides, wool, and timber. Since the introduction of the new tariff in New Zealand, and the removal of duties on foodstuffs, there has been an appreciable expansion in the export from Victoria of dried fruits, grapes, raisins, currants, sugar, tea, &c.

*Timber.*—There is an increasing demand here for rimu, which is being substituted for kauri in a number of trades. Were the shipments more carefully supervised and selected there would be a still larger consumption; but complaints are made to me by local users that consignments of both rimu and beech (or birch) are very uneven in quality—which means that, although rimu in the rough is far cheaper than kauri, still, owing to the excessive amount of waste entailed in its use, and the unseasoned condition of a good deal of it, in the long-run it comes out dearer. This seems a great pity in view of the enormous amount of rimu available and the ever-growing scarcity of kauri. My informants are the leading houses in the picture-framing and ornamental-furniture business, who also inform me that a serious competitor exists in the shape of Pacific oak (imported from Siberia), which can be landed here, carefully cut to required sizes, at £1 5s., as against £1 13s. for American oak and 15s. for rimu, allowing for a fair margin in favour of the latter if it were more carefully selected and cut to required lengths.

During the past year I have submitted reports and suggestions which I thought might extend our commercial relations with countries other than the Commonwealth, instances are,—*Auckland granite*, quoted as being suitable for the English trade by the *Stone Trades Journal*, London. *Sulphur*, for all commercial purposes, for which an almost inexhaustible market exists in Calcutta, as it is used in all the textile-factories of British India. *Tinned meats*, specially killed and prepared under caste laws for consumption by Mohammedans. There appears to be no adequate reason, seeing that New Zealand puts up “kosher meats” in tins, why this avenue of trade should not be availed of; more particularly considering the great number of Afghans and others professing the Mohammedan faith in Western Australia, British India, South Africa, the Straits Settlements, and the East generally. *Silk-worm-culture*: I have submitted inquiries as to the suitability of the North Island for this branch of the viticultural industry, and hope that it may prove a good side line for vineyardists. These inquiries came from two different sources in the north of Italy.

## APPENDIX II.

### REPORT OF PRODUCE COMMISSIONER, LONDON.

SIR,—

19th April, 1909.

I have the honour to submit the annual report on the work done by me as Produce Commissioner in connection with the produce trade of the Dominion during the past twelve months:—

The cablegram which is despatched each week to Wellington has grown in length and importance. Instead of being, as formerly, short, and containing possibly rather meagre details, it is now, when decoded and extended at Wellington for publication in the newspapers, a somewhat full report concerning the markets in this country for the chief lines of New Zealand exports.

As usual, there have been many visitors from the Dominion who have gladly availed themselves of the details concerning the distribution of New Zealand produce in this country that they have been able to obtain from this Department, and many expressions of satisfaction with the assistance afforded them have been received.

I had the honour during the year of being asked to give evidence before the departmental committee that was appointed by the Board of Trade to inquire into the general supply and distribution of meat in the United Kingdom, and accordingly attended at the Board of Trade offices and afforded the desired particulars.

A permanent representative of the Board of Trade was appointed this year by the British Government to proceed to New Zealand in order to get into touch with trade there and to report directly to the Board on all matters that may be of interest to them. The gentleman appointed to the position was Mr. F. J. Rolleston, to whom, prior to his departure for Wellington, I was able to afford considerable assistance which would prove of advantage in his mission, by introducing him to many of the leading merchants and others interested in New Zealand trade.