

and the quality was then favourably reported on. For the most part of the twelvemonth prices of linseed have been firm, but recently, towards the close of the official year, they have dropped 3s. to 4d. all round, the nominal value of New Zealand seed being about 70s. per 416 lb. ex store.

#### HOPS.

The year 1912 has opened with good trade in hops, and with prices steadily advancing. The exceptional summer experienced last year, while restricting the yield of the English crop, had a very beneficial effect on the quality. There has therefore been a keen demand amongst brewers to secure parcels, and stocks in growers' hands have been reduced to a very small compass. At the close of the official year English hops were selling at £13 per hundredweight, Californian fetching about £12, or about 60 per cent. above the rates ruling twelve months previously. There is every prospect of good business at high prices should New Zealand growers decide to make shipments to the English market during the present season. Particulars of prices and prospects of the hop-market have been cabled to Wellington, and the position has been notified by reports forwarded by you.

#### HONEY.

As requested by the Prime Minister, the Port of London Authority were approached with a view to a reduction in the port charges on honey coming from the Dominion. In their reply the Authority stated that no New Zealand honey had been warehoused at their docks for some time past, and requested particulars of shipments and the charges paid thereon. Full particulars of the services rendered by the Authority for the various charges they collect were supplied, and the apparent difference in favour of Australian honey was explained when it was learned that when packed and handled in the same manner New Zealand honey is charged under the same section and at the same rates as that from the Commonwealth.

During the year I made further extensive inquiries regarding the marketing of honey in this country, the methods of sale, the relative qualities and uses, &c., and a full report was forwarded to the Government.

In August a case containing forty-two 2 lb. packets of honey was received by you from an apiarist in the Dominion for test and report. The honey was made up in blocks, carefully wrapped in parchment paper, and enclosed in cardboard boxes. The packets were distributed amongst wholesale houses, grocers, &c., for testing. While the quality was found to be excellent, the general opinion was that the packing was useless for the English market. Full particulars were supplied to the sender as well as to the Government at Wellington. Owing to the favourable season, prices for English honey last year were very low, large quantities having been sold retail at 6d. to 7d. per pound.

#### OTHER LINES.

##### *Eggs, Poultry, Bacon, &c.*

As requested by the Department at Wellington, quotations have been regularly supplied for market prices, &c., for eggs, poultry, bacon, and hams. As regards eggs, prices all round gradually increased from the beginning of April, till at the end of the year quotations were very high, especially for new-laid, which commanded highest rates. The cold weather in February caused another jump in prices, supplies from the Continent decreasing. At the end of the twelvemonth, however, the market had again gone back to normal, and quotations were firm at prices much about the same as those of last year.

Bacon has been generally quiet, but the market has been steady. Rates showed a decline for the first six months of the official year, but they afterwards took an upward turn. Consumption has recently been on a satisfactory scale, and prices at the end of the official year were very little below those of twelve months before. Hams have also been in quiet demand, and steady rates have prevailed all round.

Poultry has not changed much in price during the year. Supplies have, as a rule, been fully equal to the demand, and sometimes in excess of requirements.

##### *Apples.*

During May last year a shipment of apples was received from the Dominion per s.s. "Rimutaka." Unfortunately, these did not land in a satisfactory condition, the temperatures at which they had been carried evidently being too low. This resulted in a large proportion of the fruit being frozen, and consequently the prices realized on the market here were low and unsatisfactory. Under the circumstances the test could not be considered as affording a fair indication of the prospects of the apple-export trade from the Dominion.

Opportunity was taken of the annual summer show of the Royal Horticultural Society to make a display of New Zealand apples at Olympia early in July. Although the quantity shown was not large, the quality of the fruit and the varieties exhibited made a very attractive display, which was favourably commented upon by the judges and by the numerous visitors to the Exhibition. The exhibit secured the "Knightian" Medal, which was the highest award that could be gained by a show of apples alone—a highly gratifying result.

I have, &c.,

H. C. CAMERON,

Produce Commissioner.

The Hon. Sir William Hall-Jones, K.C.M.G.