

siderably raised. Some of the boning meat is of fair quality, and is acceptable alike to the buyers and the inspecting authorities; on the other hand, some of the consignments consist of quarters of very poor quality, showing an almost entire absence of fat, and must have been derived from animals in very poor condition. It is in beef of this quality that danger lies; it is sold forward at a comparatively low price without adequate description, gives dissatisfaction to the purchaser, and also prejudices him against placing further orders for New Zealand meat.

I would again advise that powers be given to our Inspectors (at least, at those works where such an action is considered necessary) to grade to a minimum standard, and to reject for export such beef as, although not actually unfit for human consumption, at the time of slaughter is of such a poor quality that it would not stand the freezing and subsequent thawing at this end.

CONDEMNATION OF SHEEP-KIDNEYS

I would like in this report to draw attention to the large percentage of sheep and lamb kidneys which have been condemned here on account of their being found to be decomposed on arrival, although I have already reported on the various condemnations as they have taken place. In a few cases the condemnations have equalled 100 per cent., and in many cases from 25 to 50 per cent. of the consignments. I have kept a record of the more important condemnations, and from this I note that for the year ending the 31st March, 1912, no less than 18,569 dozen have been condemned, representing, at a low estimate, a loss of £500.

From the appearance of the condemned kidneys I am of opinion that such condemnations are preventable. The kidneys were bright in colour and dry, the paper surrounding them and the boxes in which they were packed were also dry, thus indicating that there had been no softening after the initial freezing, and leading one to the conclusion that decomposition had been allowed to set in prior to packing, or, at least, freezing, at the works of origin. I would recommend that exporters who have suffered condemnation should pack the kidneys in cooled boxes as soon as possible after slaughter of the animal, and reduce the temperature at once. This, I consider, would remedy matters, as I am forced to the conclusion that the kidneys have been allowed to remain at too high a temperature for too long a period after their removal from the carcass.

IMPORTATION OF MEAT INTO FOREIGN COUNTRIES.

Since last year, when I sent you a full report on this subject, there have not been many developments, notwithstanding the fact that the matter is one which has received considerable attention. The following are the main alterations which have occurred:—

Austria-Hungary.

As mentioned in my last report, several trial shipments of Argentine meat were sent to Austria-Hungary, and it was at one time anticipated that a regular trade might be developed. Special permission had to be obtained from the Government in the case of each individual importation, and, owing to agrarian agitation, this permission has not been granted since the middle of last year, notwithstanding the fact that meat in Austria-Hungary is dear and that its importation is greatly desired by the lower classes.

Denmark.

In December, 1911, a new law came into force which would make it possible, under certain conditions, to import meat into Denmark. This law authorizes the Minister of Agriculture to order meat to be submitted for examination in the event of the export regulations of the producing country not giving, in his opinion, "a satisfactory guarantee as regards the sanitary condition of the same." I cannot do better than give the following quotations from a despatch sent by His Majesty's Minister at Copenhagen to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in July of last year:—

"Such, then, being the regulations either actually in force or shortly to be put into complete operation, I venture to think that they afford a basis whereon His Majesty's Government would be justified in proposing to the Danish Government that animal food products, either from the United Kingdom or from His Majesty's Dominions or colonies, should be admitted into Denmark, subject to their undergoing, if required, the sanitary examination referred to above. I would further venture to suggest that, before making a formal application in this sense to the Danish Government, it would be desirable to obtain, and eventually to append to such application, specimens of the regulations in force and of the sanitary certificates, &c., which would accompany the animal products when prepared for exportation, in order that the Danish Minister of Agriculture might satisfy himself in advance whether such regulations, certificates, &c., were in fact, sufficient or otherwise to meet the legal enactments. As regards the general question as to how far it would be worth while to export animal products into Denmark, which is itself an agricultural country, opinions appear to differ. On the one hand, I have heard it stated that there is little demand in Denmark for large carcasses of beef, nor much demand for mutton, the principal forms of meat in use being veal, pork, bacon, lamb, and, among the poorest classes, horse-flesh. Moreover, it is asserted that to send meat to a meat-producing country would be to court failure. On the other hand, I have been assured that, although Denmark is, of course, a meat-producing country, yet she exports her whole production of first-quality meat, with the result that, whereas the farmer is thereby tolerably sure of getting a good price for his stock, the townsman is obliged to content himself with second-quality meat and pay a dear price for that. The townsman might therefore be assumed to be likely to welcome the importation of foreign first-quality meat if the latter could be sold at a reasonable rate and be approved by the local authority as sound and recommendable."