

I have not heard of any importations of frozen meat being made into Denmark, and doubt if they would prove a financial success, as the retail price is somewhat low, being quoted at 6d. to 7d. per pound.

Switzerland.

Conditions regarding the importation of frozen meat into this country have much improved, and, as a consequence, imports have been fairly numerous, and some of the consignments have included New Zealand meat.

When I reported last year, importations were being allowed experimentally, special permission having to be obtained in each instance from the Federal Department of Agriculture. Early in last year the experimental restrictions were abolished, and frozen meat was recognized as an ordinary import; it had then to pay an import duty of 25 francs per 100 kilos., which on the 1st January of the present year was reduced to 10 francs per 100 kilos.

Although the imports are still small, Switzerland has given a good lead to the other Continental countries, the more remarkable when it is remembered that until two years ago the importation of frozen meat into Switzerland was absolutely forbidden.

France.

I regret to have to report that the prospects as to the importation of frozen meat into this country have not improved, notwithstanding the various representations that have been made. Arising out of the International Congress on Refrigeration, it was suggested that a meeting be held in Paris to consider the subject of an international standard of meat-inspection, and attempts have been made to have this meeting officially recognized by the French Government. Owing, however, to the death of the chief organizer, M. Loverdo, this has meantime failed, and the meeting postponed to some later date.

I consider, however, that every attempt should still be made to obtain entry into this country, as, from all available information, a good trade should ensue.

France has recently made slight concessions as to the import of certain joints and sundries, and also now waives the right to examine meat in transit to other countries, but still remains closed to our lamb and mutton as usually exported.

DISCHARGE OF MEAT.

I am pleased to say that some slight improvement in the handling of meat at the London docks has taken place during the last twelve months, due mainly to the introduction of mechanical aid.

The New Zealand Shipping Company in the discharge of meat used to raise the carcasses to deck-level by means of an elevator from the hold, and then slide them down to the quay by means of "chutes," this latter being undoubtedly the cause of a certain amount of damage. They have now in use, however, a fairly complete system of carriers, which much reduces the risk of damage. The elevator from the hold is still in use, but the carcasses, instead of being sent from the deck to the quay by a chute, are now carried down on an inclined carrier and are then transferred to horizontal carriers, which take them close to the van or barge into which they are to be loaded. These carriers consist of endless canvas belts, and are protected from the weather by means of canvas covers. These horizontal carriers are also fed by means of side chutes from the portholes and with carcasses sent overside by sling. While this system may not be ideal, it is a decided improvement, and is calculated to reduce chafing, broken shanks, &c., and also lessens the time during which the carcasses are exposed to the air.

The Tyser line, which until recently discharged wholly by means of slings, a few months ago commenced to use an elevator, which conveys the carcasses from the hold, over the deck, and down to the quay. This, again, is a step in the right direction, and I have no doubt it will be extended in time.

I have nothing to report regarding the discharge of meat at the west-coast ports, no alterations having taken place since I last reported.

EXPORT OF LIVE-STOCK.

During the year ended 31st March, 1912, I have examined the undernoted live-stock prior to shipment from London to New Zealand: Twenty-seven cattle, ninety-seven sheep, twenty-six horses, thirty-nine dogs. I have also examined the following prior to shipment to Australia: Three cattle, thirteen horses, twenty-one dogs. The fees for the examination of the above have been handed by me, as received, to the High Commissioner.

ALEXANDER CRABB, M.R.C.V.S.