

New Zealand is an ideal country for breeding stud stock. A keen interest is taken in this engrossing occupation, and we had the pleasure of inspecting a number of very high-class studs, flocks, and herds. The shipping companies have recently agreed to carry stud stock to New Zealand free; a wise and generous act, which should greatly benefit the live-stock industry and ultimately themselves.

A fair trade in stud stock, particularly Clydesdale horses and dairy cattle, is done with Australia, and some Romney sheep have recently been sent to South America.

The comparative freedom of the country from diseases of live-stock is an immense advantage; but rabbits and blackberries cause much damage to the pastures unless measures are taken to exclude or eradicate them. Either operation is expensive, a good rabbit-proof fence costing well over £100 a mile and needing constant supervision.

Hay, roots, and kale and all kinds of forage crops grow freely, and if food is needed to supplement the pasture it can easily be obtained.

Crops.—Wheat and other cereals grow well, yielding about the same on the average as they do in this country, and, owing to the fine climate, their quality is often superior.

Land and labour and other items in the cost of production are so high, however, that at present prices it does not pay to grow cereals for export, and their cultivation is being restricted to the requirements of the local markets, sometimes to even less than that.

A speciality of the country rendered possible by the particularly favourable condition of soil and climate is the growth of grass, vegetable and flower seeds, for sowing in Great Britain and elsewhere.

In the Marlborough District we saw samples of excellent grass and clover seed, and also pea, onion, and other vegetable seeds, some of which were grown on contract for seedsmen in this country, and others for sale on the open market. In Central Otago we visited a large farm on which flower and other seeds were being grown with great success.

Hemp.—Another speciality of the country is the fibre known as New Zealand hemp. The plant from which it is derived, *Phormium tenax*, grows wild and freely in many parts of the country. Unfortunately, it is liable to disease, and the demand for the fibre fluctuates considerably, but obviously it presents great possibilities. During the war the fibre sold well, and in 1917–18 the export of it was valued at £1,553,791, but had fallen last year to £269,453.

Fruit.—Fruit thrives in many parts of the country. Encouraged by a guarantee of 1d. per pound net to growers, apples and pears are now being exported to England. Last season the results were not very satisfactory, either as regards the condition of a good deal of the fruit on arrival, or the price; but if, as is hoped, an export trade is established on a satisfactory basis the industry should develop and provide openings for a number of people.

Poultry.—The Director of Agriculture reports that the poultry industry is making good progress, and that during the coming season it is proposed to send a shipment of eggs to London to ascertain whether a satisfactory market is likely to be obtainable for them there.

Bees.—Bees thrive particularly well in the Dominion, and last year honey to the value of £43,032 was exported.

From the above it will be seen that dairying and sheep breeding and fattening are the most advantageous forms of farming in New Zealand. Fruitgrowing is more speculative and cannot be recommended with equal confidence to the new settler.

VII. GENERAL.

21. VIEWS OF LABOUR.—Whilst participating in the general function of the delegation, Mr. Wignall took every opportunity of getting into touch with the Labour representatives, both industrial and political, and ascertaining their views on the question of migration.

He found that they were opposed to the influx of any large numbers of people, because they considered that the cities and towns were already overcrowded. They maintained that there was no settled policy of land-settlement; that no scheme had materialized under which migrants could be absorbed upon the land; and that no agreement had been entered into with the British Government to enable any land-settlement scheme to be brought into existence in the immediate future.

Throughout the two Islands Mr. Wignall was afforded every facility for discussing the question with the Labour party, of exchanging opinions with them, and of considering its problems in the broadest possible manner.

He also attended a number of meetings in the various centres at which there appeared to be an impression that arrangements were in contemplation with employers' federations for the purpose of supplying labour as required by them, which was likely to affect the labour-market and the wage question, and that in consequence of the abnormal state of unemployment in the United Kingdom the delegates were seeking an outlet in the Dominions for the surplus mass of unemployed.

Mr. Wignall was able to remove such misapprehensions; to explain the real object of the mission; and to bring about a much better understanding.

At Wellington and Dunedin the whole of the delegation met representatives of the Labour party, and heard expressions of their views. Complaints were made on these occasions as to the shortage of houses, excessive high rents, and the difficulty of obtaining accommodation in town or country.

22. ATTRACTION TO THE CITIES.—During the course of our inquiries our attention was drawn to an inclination on the part of the younger generation to settle in the towns in preference to the country. Several reasons were offered to us in explanation of this tendency.

One of the chief causes was said to be that city life offers many social and other attractions which cannot be obtained in the country. It was stated that both boys and girls feel the disadvantages of farm life, and that their influence naturally reacts upon one another. Whilst this may be the case—especially in the more outlying districts—the results cannot be helpful to the development of a country which is so dependent upon its rich agricultural resources.