

*Price sixpence . . . and
no takers*



Pretty thin times ruled out here in the 1870s. Farming was well and truly in the doldrums and many a farmer could have been found trying to sell a sheep for sixpence to a man who was already trying to sell two of his own for a shilling. There was no market for New Zealand's enormous surplus stock.

Twelve thousand miles away, in England, an exactly reverse situation existed. A fast-growing population had outstripped the country's home production resources and was crying out for food.

And the shipping lines which linked the two countries had a further problem of their own: that of finding return freights for the ships which from 1872 onwards, were bringing more and more migrants to New Zealand.

Not that there was any lack of produce in New Zealand.

Fresh meat was here in abundance.

Rivers of milk could have been made into butter and cheese.

But England lay 100 days away and what would become of the meat, the butter, the cheese, after 14 weeks in an unrefrigerated hold? It was quite obvious to the shipowners that the answer lay in solving the problem of refrigeration.

The experiments were many and varied but success came at last and

on February 15, 1882, the Albion Line clipper "Dunedin" made New Zealand history.

She sailed from Port Chalmers with 5,000 carcasses of mutton as well as hares, rabbits, poultry and butter stored in a specially designed freezing plant. She reached London in 98 days with the frozen cargo in excellent condition.

Four months later, the New Zealand Shipping Company clipper "Matamora" followed with 5,844 carcasses of mutton, 24 quarters of beef and 77 pigs. She took 103 days on passage but again the cargo arrived in prime condition.

And it must be remembered there were no Freezing Works in those days where killing could take place. Slaughter had to be undertaken at the ship's side and the carcasses frozen down on board.

But, though the technique was by modern standards primitive, the way was open. In 1882 the ships carried 750 tons of frozen meat. Within seven years, the total had soared to 45,000 tons. Today it approaches the 400,000 ton mark. The enterprise of the shipping companies had given to New Zealand a new and prosperous industry. And this enterprise is still working for the people who live and work here.

Which, of course, includes you.

Issued in the interests of mutual understanding by

NEW ZEALAND OVERSEAS SHIPPING LINES

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