

NEW ZEALAND TRADE RETURNS.

COMPARATIVE TABLE OF SOME PRINCIPAL IMPORTS.

	1905	1904	1903	1902
Arms and ammunition	£54,512	£55,374	£57,246	£57,672
Copper and brass	33,184	33,946	34,541	27,264
Manufactures of same	18,723	22,501	11,920	9,845
Cordage, iron and steel	26,474	20,940	25,939	25,640
Cutlery	38,595	37,797	27,160	29,993
Hardware	267,175	288,881	305,898	283,303
Iron—Bar, bolt and rod	129,166	127,524	119,672	118,032
Galvanised sheet	267,289	275,929	251,940	265,464
Pipes	100,881	119,154	117,434	113,363
Sheet and plate	40,765	58,922	59,972	50,369
Pig	26,443	43,699	34,735	29,462
Wire and netting	191,793	158,767	140,715	188,749
Ironmongery, saddlers	19,951	22,164	24,402	21,104
Iron and steel, other forms of	38,439	42,529	46,369	41,041
Lead and leadware	28,416	26,860	28,260	25,602
Machinery and machines	696,974	816,832	663,268	584,887
Machines (sewing)	36,008	53,055	51,095	37,005
Nails and tacks	48,013	44,923	43,416	48,149
Silver plate and plated ware	72,149	72,570	56,395	47,263
Tinplates	43,683	38,675	40,523	52,185
Tools and implements	165,560	165,901	149,752	142,073
Zinc—Sheet and spelter	20,342	17,771	15,680	15,346
Other	173,612	188,925	162,798	153,893
Totals	£2,538,147	£2,733,639	£2,469,130	£2,367,704

Paper from Cotton Stalks.

The manufacture of paper from the fibre of the cotton stalk is one of the latest inventions and which is said to have passed the experimental stage. It is asserted that all grades of paper, from the best form of linen to the lowest grade, can be manufactured from cotton stalks. In addition to this, a variety of by-products, such as alcohol, nitrogen, material for gun cotton and smokeless powder can also be secured in paying quantities. Mills for the use of cotton stalks in that way may become general in the cotton-growing states of America. It is estimated that on an area of land producing a bale of cotton at least one ton of stalks can be gathered. Upon this basis, from 10,000,000 to 12,000,000 tons of raw material could be secured for the production of paper, which would increase the value of the cotton crop of the Southern States nearly £2,000,000. According to a letter in the *Manufacturer's Record*, of Baltimore, a company has been organised under the laws of Maine, with a capital stock of £3,000,000, preferred and common, for the purpose of manufacturing pulp and paper from cotton stalks. Mr. Harvie Jordan, president of the Southern Cotton Association, has been elected president.

A New Method of Insulating Copper Wire.

A cheap and effective method of insulating conductors for use in house wiring and other purposes is described by the *Electrotechniker*. The surface of the copper is first treated by passing it through a solution of proto-sulphide of potassium, and so exposing it to the action of sulphuretted hydrogen vapour. When the copper has attained a bluish-black tinge, it is exposed to the air until it becomes quite black, and finally it is well washed in water. When dry, it is only necessary to coat the wire with a suitable varnish made of good linseed oil; to do this the wire is drawn through a bath of the melted varnish, and dried. The resulting covering is perfectly continuous and impervious to moisture, and its flexibility, though not so great as that of gutta-percha, is ample for ordinary purposes.

Locomotive Running.

The *Natal Government Railway Magazine* contains in its September number an article on the subject of the disadvantages which accrue from single shifting as against pooling of engines, from a locomotive engineer's point of view. This question is one that has frequently been discussed of late in Natal, and therefore the conclusions arrived at are of interest. They are, that the working of engines on the single-shift principle is a decided advantage, as, independent of the fact that it creates a more contented and harmonious working staff, the consumption of fuel and lubricants is reduced to the lowest possible limits, it also reflects to a very great extent on the upkeep of the engines, both as regards running and general repairs, the saving to be derived from these items being worthy of consideration.

Large Paper-making Machine.

Some idea of the dimensions of the largest paper-making machine ever constructed in the United Kingdom may be had from the fact that it fills a shed 185 ft. long. It has great width, due to the fact that the Swedish Paper Mill Company, for whom it was built, intends to use it for the production of two 75-in. sheets of paper, a total width of 150 ins., or 12½ ft. The paper is to be run through the machine at the high speed of 500 ft. per minute, which calls for very heavy and accurate driving gear and large rolls. To provide paper of a superior finish a stack of calender rolls is fitted, weighing 70 tons, the lowest one alone accounting for nearly 15 tons. The entire machine weighs 550 tons, and is driven by a 200-h p. steam engine.

De Beers Diamond Corporation has offered £2,500 towards the fund for the establishment of a college in South Africa for the higher education of natives.

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