

districts was carried out, it would not be very long before a very good connection was obtained. The class of customers to be, if possible, secured is that which usually deals regularly with the high-class butcher in the immediate districts in which they reside. These customers are generally thoroughly reliable as payers, and usually run monthly accounts, so that when their regular patronage is secured the butcher they formerly dealt with misses their custom. He naturally is anxious to find out the cause of the discontinuance of their orders, and makes inquiries. On being told by them that the orders have been discontinued through no fault on his part, but simply because they are now obtaining an equally good article from the New Zealand store at a much lower price than they were paying to him, he is, of course, greatly concerned, and begins to think. The result is that he decides that it is not politic to lose his customers if he can avoid it, and rightly concluding that if this class of customers are so favourably disposed to New Zealand mutton it is time he was keeping it for sale, he resolves to do so forthwith. He therefore informs his customers that if they will renew their orders with him he will supply them with the same mutton as they have been obtaining from the New Zealand store, at the same price. On his undertaking to do this the customers, recognising that it is more convenient for them to obtain their meat from the butcher in their immediate neighbourhood, who can call regularly every morning at their house for orders, rather than having to send their order to the New Zealand store, agree to this proposal. This occurs in the several districts from which customers have been attracted to the New Zealand store, and gradually, as the result of this system of advertising, New Zealand mutton will be found in the shops of the best class of butchers there, and being sold by them on its merits. These butchers, finding the mutton thus in demand, and realising that there is a good profit to themselves in handling it, will gradually push the sale of it amongst their other customers. In this way a large demand may be gradually worked up, and the consumption being amongst those who can afford to pay a fair price for a good article, the possibility of maintaining a payable price to the producer for New Zealand mutton can be understood.

Instead of the wholesale salesman having to urge the retailer to introduce the mutton to his customers, the customers, having had the mutton introduced to them by the advertisement of the New Zealand stores, ask the butcher to supply them with it, thus becoming canvassers for New Zealand mutton, and the butcher then asks the wholesale salesman for it.

Of course, this system of advertisement must be undertaken by the New Zealand producers themselves—or by the New Zealand Government as their representatives. It is not to be expected that a private trader can afford to do it. Nor will the wholesale houses here undertake it—they are, of course, equally interested in mutton from other countries as well as from New Zealand. A private trader would naturally object to furthering a system which would have the effect of encouraging direct competition with the trade he had worked up.

The profit derived from the business done in the shops would at the very least pay working-expenses, so that the cost of the advertisement for the mutton would be nil. I am, however, satisfied that a handsome profit besides can be made from the shops, but, of course, under the present proposal there is no need to consider this.

New Zealand is, comparatively speaking, a small contributor to the total meat requirements of the British market, therefore it is all the easier to make a specialty of her produce as being of first-class quality and fit for use by the better classes, keeping it ahead and clear from the growing competition of River Plate and Australia.

The means I am now advocating for the improvement of the demand for New Zealand mutton in the Home markets are not put forward without thought, and from my personal experience of business conducted on similar lines I am thoroughly convinced that the results would be as I now anticipate.

I have, &c.,

H. C. CAMERON, Inspector of Produce

The Hon. W. P. Reeves, Agent-General for New Zealand, London.

DEAR SIR,—

13, Victoria Street, Westminster, S.W., 6th May, 1898.

I had no intention at the present time of again reverting to the urgent need which I consider there is for the producers in New Zealand bestirring themselves to insure energetic means being taken for the improvement of the distribution of their meat in this country, but I think it is advisable, in order to show the energy with which the meat from River Plate is being pushed, to draw your attention to the annual report lately issued by Messrs. James Nelson and Sons (Limited). In that report, presented to the shareholders of the company at their general meeting last week, it is stated that “The directors have been giving their careful attention to increasing the number of their retail shops, so as to render the company more independent of the wholesale markets for the disposal of its products, and have pleasure in stating that during the past four months the trading shows a much better result than in the corresponding period of last year.” The chairman also, at that meeting, said that the shops belonging to the company proved more remunerative than did the business of selling meat in the wholesale market, a process which he termed a “scramble.”

As you are aware, I have persistently advocated the opening of a few high-class shops in districts where the merits of New Zealand meat is not known, as an advertisement in order to create a demand for it. I have not, however, suggested that more than one shop should be opened in any one centre, nor have I considered it advisable that these shops should be looked to to return a large profit. I believe, however, that opposition to carrying out a scheme such as I have suggested arises from the fact that doubts are entertained in New Zealand as to whether these shops would pay.

When, however, we find a firm of such experience in the meat trade as James Nelson and Sons openly announcing that they are increasing the number of their retail shops so as to render them—