

1899.

NEW ZEALAND.

DIRECT TRADE BETWEEN NEW ZEALAND AND
MANCHESTER

(CORRESPONDENCE RE THE PROSPECTS OF ESTABLISHING A).

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

No. 1.

The AGENT-GENERAL to the Right Hon. the PREMIER.

Westminster Chambers, 13, Victoria Street, London, S.W.,

10th February, 1899.

SIR,—

At the invitation of the Manchester Ship Canal Company, I went to Manchester for the purpose of inspecting the docks there, and inquiring as to the prospects of establishing a direct trade between New Zealand and that part of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Cameron, our Inspector of Produce, who came with me, has prepared a report giving information on the subject, a copy of which I herewith transmit.

I also enclose copy of letter which I have received from the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, in which the advantages of a direct trade are carefully set forth.

The Right Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

I have, &c.,
W. P. REEVES.

Enclosure 1 in No. 1.

Mr. H. C. CAMERON to the AGENT-GENERAL.

DEAR SIR,—

13, Victoria Street, Westminster, 27th January, 1899.

In accordance with your instructions, I went to Manchester last week, and, as directed by you, I beg to submit a report on the subject of promoting a direct trade between that part of the United Kingdom and New Zealand.

As you are aware, I was for some time engaged in business in connection with New Zealand produce in Manchester, and I am, therefore, perhaps in a position to express an opinion with regard to the opening of the Manchester Ship Canal.

I have always recognised the possibilities of colonial trade with the district surrounding that centre, but I must say that I was astonished to find what rapid strides have lately been made there in the produce trade. Before reporting on the immediate subject of trade with New Zealand, it may be useful to refer to a few facts regarding the Ship Canal.

The proposal, which had long been considered, to connect Manchester with the sea so as to permit of direct trade with all parts of the world took practical effect in 1883, when a Bill was laid before Parliament to authorise the construction of a canal. After strong opposition the Bill was ultimately passed, and in 1894 the canal was completed, and Manchester became recognised as a seaport. The canal is thirty-five miles and a half in length, having a depth of water of 26 ft. throughout the entire distance, and this depth is constantly maintained by dredging. The width at the bottom of the waterway is 120 ft., except at one part, where it narrows to 80 ft. Vessels can enter the canal and proceed to Manchester before and after tide-time, and in a number of instances they have entered after high water, and reached Manchester before they could have entered the Liverpool Dock. The safe navigability of the canal by the largest sea-going carrying steamers has been fully demonstrated, and there need be no apprehension on the part of ship-owners on this score. Steamers are now being navigated regularly on the canal trading with India, Canada, Australia, Egypt, South America, and the Mediterranean, &c. The docks are large, and have all the latest improvements for handling and storing produce of all kinds. The transit-sheds and stores are all of the newest designs. Hydraulic and steam cranes, and other appliances for giving rapid despatch, are in general use. There is a complete railway system connecting the main lines throughout the country with the docks, and all the inland canals