

throughout England are also in working connection with them. There are regular and frequent sailings of steamers from Manchester to all the principal coastal ports, so that transshipments of cargo can be dealt with expeditiously.

On the banks of the canal numerous works have been erected, and others are in course of completion. The Smelting Corporation (Limited) have erected works, and expect to import annually over 100,000 tons of ore. The Co-operative Wholesale Society has a large soap- and candle-works, and they are large consumers of tallow. There are large timber-yards. The C.C. and D. Company (Limited) have just opened a cold-air store, having a capacity of a hundred thousand sheep. The Manchester Corporation Lairages and Foreign Animals Wharf, having provision for a thousand head of cattle, enabling foreign cattle to be landed and dealt with expeditiously, are situated there. There is also a grain-elevator, built on the latest American plans, with a capacity of 1,500,000 bushels, having 226 bins, and machinery on such a scale that the following operations can all be performed simultaneously: (1) Discharging from vessels in dock at the rate of 350 tons per hour; (2) weighing in tower at water's edge; (3) conveying and distributing into any of the 226 bins; (4) moving grain and weighing at the rate of 500 tons per hour; (5) sacking grain, weighing, and loading sacks into forty railway-trucks and ten carts simultaneously; (6) conveying from the elevator into barges or coasters at the rate of 150 tons per hour, if in bulk, or two hundred and fifty sacks per hour, if bagged. Attached to this elevator is Metcalf's Patent Dryer, used in America with most satisfactory results, and capable of drying 50 tons of grain at each operation.

It will be seen that preparations have been made on a thorough and large scale for the encouragement of direct trade with Manchester.

The Canadian Government has for some considerable time been keenly alive to the importance to their producers of developing their export trade, and has been prosecuting inquiries in this country as to the best means of attaining this desire. About eighteen months ago Professor Robertson, Chief Commissioner of Agriculture for the Canadian Government, spent some considerable time here making a thorough investigation on their behalf as to the prospects of trade. His reports having been favourable, and his comments upon the capabilities of the district surrounding Manchester having been encouraging, his visit was followed by one from the Hon. Mr. Fisher, Canadian Minister of Agriculture, who personally examined the facilities afforded by that port.

The Manchester merchants, keenly alive, as they always are, to business possibilities, were willing to promote a line of steamers to trade with Canada on condition that the Canadian producers themselves took an interest in their venture. They therefore approached the Canadian Government with this object, and, the interests of both being recognised, the Government granted them a subsidy of £8,000 per annum for three years conditional upon their running a regular fortnightly service from Canadian ports to Manchester. A company was then at once formed named "The Manchester Liners (Limited)," and the building of large 8,500-ton cargo-steamers was proceeded with.

On the occasion of your visit to Manchester I accompanied you in inspecting the first of these vessels that had just arrived in port on the inaugural voyage. Great enthusiasm was being displayed by all parties concerned—shipowners, canal officers, and merchants alike—and faith in the large and rapid development of trade was generally expressed. Complete satisfaction was felt with the ease with which this large vessel, the "Manchester City," had navigated the canal, and it was considered that this would remove any apprehension that might have existed in the minds of shipowners as to the safety of large vessels when traversing it. A large cargo had been brought by this boat, and, as it may be of interest to know what produce is sent from Canada, I enumerate it, as follows: 450 cattle, 150 sheep, 2 horses, 469 packages poultry, 1,416 boxes butter, 11,972 cases cheese, 37,117 bushels (bulk) and 1,500 bags oats, 67,000 bushels maize, 39,929 bushels wheat, 3,408 bales hay, 6,470 bundles pulp, 1,000 sacks oatmeal, 1,084 cases eggs, 1,250 tierces lard, 4,600 bags starch, 500 bags sugar, 246 standards, deals, and ends, 4,274 doors, 245 bundles of doors, and several bundles of dry goods and fittings.

Direct trade between Canada and Manchester would thus appear to be now satisfactorily established, and it not unreasonably can be considered what probabilities there are for a similar opening being secured for the produce of Australia and New Zealand. Of course it is only with reference to the trade of New Zealand that you wish me to report. It is now over three years since, in an interview sent to the colonial newspapers, I stated: "After careful inquiry and consideration I came to the conclusion that Manchester, having just opened her canal for direct traffic with all parts of the world, and commanding the central position for expeditious distribution of colonial produce to the vast manufacturing districts of England, offered the most favourable position for the introduction of colonial produce. I consider that there is a good and large field expanding from Manchester for all classes of colonial produce, and am convinced that in a very short time there will be a large trade doing there. The trade has scarcely commenced yet, but with the enormous population within a radius of thirty miles from the Exchange of Manchester—a population larger than that within an equal distance of St. Paul's, in London—it must be capable of very great development." These remarks applied to the distribution of colonial produce generally in the Midlands, and I consider they are still as applicable as when made.

More than three years ago an attempt was made to open up direct trade with Australia. In 1895 the first direct shipment of frozen-meat from Victoria was brought by the "Timaru" up the canal. Then, as now, the frozen-meat trade of Manchester and district was in the hands of the River Plate shippers, and strong opposition was evinced by them to the introduction of meat from any other part of the world. The River Plate people have for so long held possession of that trade in the Midlands that any steps that may be taken to introduce meat from Australia or New Zealand there will be fought very keenly. The result of the determined opposition shown by the