

The expenses of the Produce Commissioner of London for the same period amount to £1,254 0s. 9d., made up as follows:—

	£	s.	d.
Salary	400	0	0
Clerical assistance	191	8	7
Contingencies	4	5	11
Travelling-expenses and allowances	658	6	3

The latter item is unusually heavy, as it includes the cost of Mr. H. C. Cameron's visit to the colony to give evidence before the parliamentary Committee appointed to report on the frozen-meat trade.

APPENDIX A.

SIR,—

Durban, 2nd April, 1904.

I have the honour to send a report of my year's work in South Africa. I can hardly realise that it is twelve months since I set foot in this country; such however is the case. Whatever the ultimate result may be, it seems to me that among the many wise steps taken that of establishing representation in South Africa by our esteemed Government will yet be proved to be one of the wisest. I came here with the fullest confidence in the productive powers of New Zealand; here it was for me to discover one of the best possible markets anywhere in the Empire. There are many reasons for this assumption; for on the one side we have excellent facilities for coping with the trade on terms equal to any, and on the other the backward state of this country with regard to such matters, and the indisposition of the local people to do much towards providing supplies for their own needs. The common tendency is to produce nothing which they can import: hence our opportunity.

On my arrival in Durban it became necessary for me to make myself acquainted with the place and people commercially, and more to make both acquainted with me. This was not so easy a matter as one might at first suppose; though colonials themselves, the people of South Africa, and more especially the people of Natal, look upon their oversea cousins with a good deal of hesitation, not unmingled with suspicion. As one small illustration: On my arrival, thinking that the little courtesy commonly extended in New Zealand to representatives of other Governments would be common to all parts of the Empire, I proceeded to interview the General Manager of the Natal Government Railways. Not at first taking my full credentials with me may have been a bar, but even after I had presented my full credentials, I was not fortunate enough to secure the concession which we in New Zealand consider one of the least things we can do. But as I did not come for personal considerations, such little matters may be passed over, except as an illustration of how carefully one must feel his way. I am proud to say that, so far as opinions are concerned, more recent experience has confirmed my first impressions to the effect that the market is ours if we are prepared to take possession of it. What use has been made of the opportunity it is the purpose of this report to make plain. At the outset, as your representative I had to encounter an attitude created by those who had been here before me. Produce of different kinds had been sent to the South African market with a reputation that it was New Zealand produce; in many instances it was of very inferior quality, and had created a very bad impression indeed, so much so that I had to call all my past experience to my aid in order to secure attention at all. The one fact, however, that the New Zealand Government had sent over a special representative, meant a great deal with shrewd business men—and it must be remembered that the business men here are of the shrewdest. There was an outcry for solid information, and that was the first task to which I put myself. Naturally enough, as the New Zealand Government had sent a man to look after commercial interests, a good many thought that there might be direct trade with the Government, and I must say some aspects lent colour to that thought. Although not regarded as perfect, the people on the whole have supreme faith in what the Government does in the way of commercial movements; even the Natives know the value of the Government seal. The demand for information has not grown less with the passing months. An interest has been awakened, not only in the products but in the country, in the people, and in the legislation. Among those who have during the past twelve months gone from South Africa to New Zealand are not only those who claim New Zealand as their home, but some of the smartest business men from South Africa.

Three times since my arrival in Durban I have visited all the principal centres in South Africa, and, judging by the many references to me and my work in the newspapers, I am one of the best-known men in South Africa. The work which falls to my share often requires the activity of two men; it has frequently been remarked to me, if you had an active assistant to take some of the work you would still find quite enough to do. I have not the slightest doubt that in this Department extra energy and extra means at my disposal might mean extra grist to the mill. On my first visit to the ports farther south, I found facilities for unloading New Zealand cargoes anything but what they ought to have been. No one seemed particularly at fault: the inconvenience had simply not been taken into consideration; but when I, as a properly accredited Government representative, interviewed the proper authorities, these inconveniences, which had caused such annoying and expensive delays, were looked into, and very great improvements had been made, so that now ships from New Zealand have an equal chance with ships from any part of the world. In addition to looking into these matters which were at once forced upon my attention, on each of my three visits to the principal towns I have been able to get into the closest touch with a large number of the principal business men, and I must say, with one accord they displayed a wish to become better acquainted with our colony and with possibilities of trade.