

cod, pickerel, and whitebait are perhaps amongst the finest varieties of fish I have ever eaten. Flounders and whitebait when caught fresh in New Zealand and properly cooked are, I think, the finest fish in the world.

While the above is true, I am afraid New Zealand will not be able to do much with Africa in the fish trade, unless it is with blue-cod and tinned whitebait. During my eight months' residence and travelling in Africa, I was informed by many dealers, including the Cape Fishery Company, who have branches in Johannesburg and Pretoria, that the majority of New Zealand fish were unsuitable for the African markets. The reason given was that they were too dry after being cooked and also seemed to be void of flavour.

While in Durban at the beginning of January I discussed this question with Mr. Gow, our Trade Representative. We examined New Zealand fish in the cold-storages, and in order to prove the correctness of the statements above referred to, Mr. Gow and myself secured a few nice frozen flounders and a blue-cod, and had them defrosted and properly cooked in New Zealand style by an Australian lady. My reason for being anxious to do this was that I am always after practical tests. After having the fish cooked and a trial of eating them, both Mr. Gow and myself were in a position to speak authentically on the question. We found that the flounders through the freezing and defrosting process had lost nearly all that natural flavour so characteristic of them when eaten in New Zealand; besides, we found them dry and chippy. The blue-cod, on the other hand, seemed to have retained its flavour much better, and, in my opinion, the latter fish would find a market in Africa. With reference to whitebait, I would advise trial-shipments being made in tins.

RABBITS.

I had the pleasure of examining some New Zealand rabbits in the freezing-works at Durban and Cape Town. I also saw a few samples up-country at Johannesburg and Pretoria, and have eaten New Zealand rabbits after being frozen and defrosted, and I am glad to be able to say that they were very fine in quality, and most people whom I came in contact with who had had any experience with New Zealand rabbits spoke well of their superior quality.

I would like to point out to New Zealand shippers that it is equally important for them to send their goods to Africa in neat cases as it is in sending them to Great Britain. I would recommend that all rabbits be carefully selected, sized, and graded, after which they should be carefully packed in neat cases. Each case should be neatly branded; the words "New Zealand" should be on the case in large letters.

BUTTER.

I do not wish to find fault all round about our methods of shipping and the quality of our produce, but I do feel as though I am placing some hard cold facts before the butter producers and dealers of New Zealand which should at least receive their careful consideration. Before leaving New Zealand last year I was strongly opposed to the question of holding large quantities of butter in the cold-storages through the winter with a view to catching a higher market in the spring. My reason for this was that, in all my experience in other countries where perishable produce is held for any great length of time, I have found that although a larger price may be obtained, the question of deterioration, as a rule, cuts badly against the reputation of such produce, no matter what market it is sold on.

At the end of April last, just before leaving New Zealand, I made inquiries at the various freezing-works, and found that about a hundred and twenty thousand boxes of butter were stored in the colony. I at that time made recommendations personally and through the Press of the colony to a number of the owners to ship the butter while new to the British markets. This could have been done at a profitable price to the producers. Instead of that being done, the butter was held through the winter and a good deal of it shipped to Africa.

While on duty for the Transvaal Government, and when travelling about the country, I regretted to find some of our best brands on the market in an old-state condition, and although at that time I had no intention whatever of returning to New Zealand, I wrote the Rt. Hon. Mr. Seddon an unsolicited letter with reference to our meat and butter trade. Later on, when my re-engagement with the New Zealand Government took place, I, in company with Mr. Gow, made some investigations at Durban; I also examined a number of our brands of butter at Cape Town and Port Elizabeth in the month of January.

The quality of the majority of butters which I examined had deteriorated very much, and this could not be wondered at when I say that I saw some of the same butter before leaving New Zealand eight and nine months before I examined it in Africa. One brand which has a good reputation in New Zealand I found according to the date-marks to be twelve months old; of course, the handlers in Africa rarely look for date-marks, although they do pay attention to our grade-marks, and are most particular to see that the goods bear the Government's first-grade stamp. The fact that the dealers and consumers in Africa do not know the age of our butter naturally causes them to compare our old butter on the same counters with Argentine fresh. The latter butter would not be in the same street with ours so far as quality is concerned if our goods were laid down on the markets in a fairly fresh condition, or rather at short notice. As early as November I had the pleasure of examining some of New Zealand's stored butter in Cape Town in company with Mr. Gow, our Trade Commissioner. I at that time made the statement to him that it was to be regretted that New Zealand producers saw fit to hold such well-made butter until it considerably aged, and then to place it on a practically new market which should have a large outlet for our produce in future, and to which market we should send only the choicest quality.

Before leaving Durban in January, Mr. Gow informed me that he had heard very bad reports about a well-known New Zealand brand of butter which was handled by Reiners, Von Laers, and Co. On my way from Durban to Cape Town I was able to get ashore at Port Elizabeth for a few hours, where I examined the butter in question. Unfortunately for the reputation of New Zealand butter, the agents had quite a stock of this butter on hand at the time of my visit, and they