

REPORT ON VISIT TO THE ARGENTINE REPUBLIC.

SIR,—

Agent-General's Office, London 4th June, 1904.

I have the honour to submit herewith a brief report of my recent investigations in connection with agriculture, dairying, and other commercial enterprises in the Argentine Republic.

I have, &c.,

J. A. KINSELLA,

Dairy Commissioner.

The Hon. Sir J. G. Ward, K.C.M.G.,

Minister of Industries and Commerce, Wellington, New Zealand.

INTRODUCTION.

IN making a general report on the agricultural and pastoral industries of that great, or, I may say, vast prairie country, the Argentine Republic, I feel as though I had had only a mere glimpse over her extensive lands, owned and controlled by a great Spanish race. First of all, I may point out that in order to permit of a thorough, or, rather, a general and practical knowledge of this vast country being obtained, it would be necessary for one to remain in the country for at least a year and a half or two years; even then it would require almost constant travelling and very careful observations and inquiries in order to become acquainted with the details connected with farming, climates, &c. I therefore submit that it would not be reasonable to expect that I should write all of this brief report from actual observations during my stay in the republic. I have, however, travelled a great deal while there, and, in my opinion, no better means could be adopted of obtaining sound information than of practical observations throughout such a vast agricultural country.

When one gets into the dairying and wheat districts and has personal chats and discussions with the people who are actually engaged on the land, he is, in my opinion, in a position to get more reliable information than could be obtained from any other source. Although I found it difficult while in the country districts to carry on a conversation with the native Spanish people, owing to my not being acquainted with their language, yet I was able to obtain a good deal of practical information with regard to farming, &c., in the country.

Travelling by rail is rather expensive in the Argentine, and while I was fortunate in obtaining a few free passes over the railways, my expenses, on the other hand, ran into a fairly large sum. I endeavoured, however, as far as possible to keep down expenses—at least, unnecessary expenses.

Without going into history it may be well for me to point out that the Argentine Republic is a cosmopolitan country, which has been populated largely from Europe. The country had in the earlier days the task of supplanting savagery by civilisation; in the end, however, the savage races had to give way to the Caucasian races, or otherwise be annihilated by them. The spirit which animated the Latin races after the discovery of North America by Columbus led to the formation of many exploring parties in Spain. Amongst the first to explore the country—now the Argentine Republic—was Don Juan Díaz de Solís. He first struck a large river, which he named the “Sweet Sea,” or “Navara Dulac,” which is now known as the great river La Plata or River Plate. After landing he was killed by the Red Indians. This took place as far back as 1515. Many other explorers met with a similar fate, until the great General San Martín finally suppressed the Indians, and it was only then that things settled down on a sound basis in the Argentine Republic. In what is known as the Avenue de Mayo, in front of the National Government Buildings in the City of Buenos Aires, stands a fine statue of that great general, whose name will always be remembered by all Argentinos.

The President of the Republic in office at the time of my visit was General Roca. When I was in the Argentine they were on the eve of a new election, which would be for the purpose of determining who would be their next President. I was told that the old President under their laws cannot be re-elected by the people; it therefore follows that an entirely new President must be appointed by the voice of the people. It was in 1880 that General Roca was first elected President. After six-years of office he was followed by Don Miguel Juárez Celman, who resigned in 1890. After a great revolution Dr. Carlos Pilegrini became President in 1892. Dr. Lewis Sáenz Peña was elected President, after which, in 1890, Dr. José Euzébio was appointed. In October of that year General Roca again became President. During my short stay in the Argentine I heard so many nice things from all quarters with reference to General Roca's admirable qualities and his great administrative powers that I have much pleasure in introducing his name to the public of New Zealand. The fact cannot be got away from that under General Roca's wise administration the Argentine Republic had gone ahead in leaps and bounds, and has, generally speaking, prospered. And by his determined purpose to maintain peace, the impending war with Chili has been averted, and it may be fairly said that permanent peace has been established in the country.

The Argentine is a protectionist country; its resources for conducting the Government are largely raised from the Customs duties. In 1899 the imports into the country subject to duty were \$102,080,738 gold. This statement may be wondered at, but when I say that the Argentine has over 120,000,000 sheep and the United States has only about 62,000,000, you can arrive at your own conclusion on this point. Exports from Argentina for 1902 and the first quarter of 1903 were \$220,000,000 gold, and imports \$100,000,000 gold, making a grand total for foreign trade of \$320,000,000 gold, equivalent to £64,000,000. Nearly all products produced and manufactured in the Argentine are not heavily taxed when exported to Britain or her colonies, whereas, on the other hand, nearly everything she imports from foreign countries is heavily taxed. This is on similar lines to the system in vogue—the retaliation system—which has long since been adopted in the United States of America; whereas in the case of goods shipped from the Argentine to Great Britain the open-door policy still exists. Without for a moment thinking of touching on political matters, I think I could safely suggest that the sooner Mr. Chamberlain's scheme of preferential