

REPORT.

THE Extension of Commerce Committee, to whom was referred Paper No. 56, copy of agreement with the New Zealand and African Steamship Company, have the honour to submit the following report:—

1. That a service connecting with the west coast of Britain was desirable.
2. That the several companies at that time connected with our trade were not making any adequate or systematic effort to establish such an outlet for our growing requirements.
3. That, although the time given for tendering was not long, the tenders received extensive advertisement, and, in addition thereto, notification by circular was sent to practically the whole of the shipping world, so that all who desired to tender had an opportunity to do so. No application for an extension of time was made by any company.
4. That the best tender was accepted.
5. That the contract entered into, involving as it does no cost to the colony, is a satisfactory one.
6. That the service, although occupying a longer time *en route* than a direct one, is being carried out satisfactorily and to the undoubted benefit of the producers of the colony.
7. That in regard to complaints about freight: In the case of that on rabbits, the company when the matter was brought under their notice, agreed to reduce the freight to the amount charged by competing companies, although their original rate was within the terms of the contract.

THOS. MACKENZIE,
Chairman, Extension of Commerce Committee