

SESSION II.
1906.
NEW ZEALAND.

INDUSTRIES AND COMMERCE REPORT

(28th August, 1906).

BY THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRIES AND COMMERCE, HON. SIR J. G. WARD, K.C.M.G.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

MY LORD,—

Department of Industries and Commerce,
Wellington, 28th August, 1906.

I have the honour to submit to Your Excellency the report of the Department of Industries and Commerce for the year ending the 31st March, 1906.

I have, &c.,
J. G. WARD,
Minister of Industries and Commerce.

His Excellency the Governor of New Zealand.

In presenting my fifth annual statement it becomes my pleasant duty to draw attention to the eminently satisfactory prices realised for this country's produce on the markets of Great Britain and elsewhere during the past year. The prices obtained for wool, butter, cheese, and hemp have been such as should give the greatest encouragement to the producers, whilst in the case of frozen meats and other leading export lines the prices compare favourably with previous years. The increased prices, although there was a falling-off in the volume of certain lines exported, has brought the value of the country's exports up to a sum far beyond that ever previously recorded. The value for the year 1905 shows an increase of £907,599 over the previous year. There are not lacking indications that prices for the present year will be in most cases well up to last year's, especially as regards butter, hemp, and wool, and altogether the future of producers of these lines may be regarded as particularly bright.

Competition, however, is exceedingly keen, and if the position of this country's produce on the markets is to be maintained every effort must be made to keep up and improve the quality of the produce, and also to place it constantly before the traders and consumers of other lands. Good work has been done by the present Produce Commissioner in London, but the magnitude of the work now required in supervising the arrival and distribution of produce, and the opening-up of fresh channels of trade, is too great a task for one man. In view of the very much enlarged producing-capacity of the country, and the growth of exports, I am of the opinion that the time has come for the strengthening of the commercial staff in London. Special efforts should be made to bring New Zealand produce under notice of the many importers in the large manufacturing centres of the United Kingdom, who would be glad to become direct importers if they were made acquainted with the exact *modus operandi* now adopted by London houses, which, to a large extent, control the export trade of this country. It is gratifying to know that merchants in Glasgow, Manchester, Liverpool, Cardiff, Bristol, and other large centres of population in the Mother-country are turning their attention to New Zealand produce, and are anxious to make direct commercial and financial arrangements with the colony. This is largely due to the Department's representation at produce and other exhibitions held in the United Kingdom. The intelligent representation of this country's commercial interests, not only in the Mother-country but also in Canada, the United States, India, Japan, and throughout the East, could not but materially benefit exporters by developing fresh markets for our produce.