

WEST COAST OF ENGLAND STEAMSHIP SERVICE.

This service, inaugurated by the Department, has since been regularly maintained by the New Zealand and African Steamship Company, under contract which expired in February of this year. Monthly steamers now leave New Zealand for Bristol (Avonmouth), Cardiff (Barry), Liverpool, Manchester, and Glasgow, taking for these ports cargoes of New Zealand lamb, mutton, beef, veal, pork, rabbits, poultry, butter, cheese, wool, skins, hemp, tow, grain, timber, &c., at rates of freight equivalent to those ruling to London.

Steamers of the type of the "Devon," "Sussex," and "Oswestry Grange," and others of equal tonnage are regularly employed in this service, and this fact alone should be a criterion of its success. English West Coast ports import from New Zealand from 60,000 to 85,000 carcasses of mutton and lamb monthly during the season, and large quantities of frozen rabbits and boned beef are regularly shipped to Glasgow.

A large proportion of wool exported from New Zealand finds its way to the United Kingdom by the West Coast service, Manchester proving an excellent centre for distribution to the large woollen-mills in Yorkshire. These shipments range up to 5,682 bales monthly.

In addition to farm and agricultural produce shipped to Liverpool, regular shipments of timber go forward to this port, averaging from 60,000 to over 100,000 superficial feet per steamer.

TRADE WITH THE EAST.

No action has yet been taken to subsidise a line of steamers from New Zealand to the East, and in this connection I might draw attention to the enormous population in Eastern countries and the Pacific Islands, which are in comparatively close proximity to Australia and New Zealand. Whitaker, for 1907, gives the approximate number of peoples as follows:—

China	...	...	...	...	...	400,000,000
Japan	...	...	...	...	...	44,260,606
India	...	...	...	...	...	294,361,056
Islands of Java	...	...	...	...	...	35,412,000
Philippine Islands	...	...	...	...	...	7,635,426
Ceylon	...	...	...	...	...	3,950,123
Singapore	...	...	...	...	...	572,249
Hong Kong	...	...	...	...	...	377,850
French Indo-China	...	...	...	...	...	18,708,000
German Australia	...	...	...	...	...	656,000
German Samoa	...	...	...	...	...	33,000
German China	...	...	...	...	...	84,000
New Caledonia	...	...	...	...	...	23,000
New Hebrides	...	...	...	...	...	100,664
Tahiti and adjacent Islands	...	...	...	...	...	20,000
Solomon, Gilbert, and Friendly Islands	...	...	...	...	...	235,771
Fiji	...	...	...	...	...	120,124
A gross total of						806,549,869

It is generally acknowledged that the inhabitants of China and Japan are, to a large extent, throwing off their old-time conservatism as regards food and wearing apparel, and now consuming food and adopting clothing of the same kind and class as Europeans.

Thus huge markets are rapidly developing, which will take almost unlimited quantities of produce, wool, woollen goods, leather, &c., from the nearest and most regular source of supply.

This is perhaps an opportune moment to bring under notice the large trade which is now being carried on by Australia with Japan, China, and the States of the Indo-China Peninsula, together with the Malay Archipelago and the Philippine Islands.

The principal lines exported from Australia are flour, wheat, and other cereals, butter, hides and leather, timber, forage, fruits, and manures.

There are practically no exports direct from New Zealand to the East, but it is within the knowledge of the Department that some of our products filter through Australian channels to Japan and China. The latest figures available from Mr. J. B. Suttor, commercial representative of New South Wales, afford a striking example of the rapid progress made by the Commonwealth in this trade to the East during the last few years. I quote the following from his reports:—

"Australian Trade with Japan."

Year.	Imports into Japan.			Exports from Japan.		Total Trade.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	£	s.	d.
1903	119,993	10	0	335,246	10	455,240	0	0
1904	439,908	10	0	443,858	18	883,767	8	0
1905	600,119	12	0	407,293	12	1,007,413	4	0

"In the Philippine Islands a further large increase is reported as follows:—

Year.	Imports into Philippine Islands.			Exports from Philippine Islands.		Total Trade.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	£	s.	d.
1903	128,779	3	4	70,052	5	198,831	9	2
1905	284,512	18	4	92,275	8	376,788	6	8