

prices dropped to $3\frac{1}{2}$ d. and $3\frac{1}{2}$ d. per pound for Canterbury and North Island respectively, in 1906 at that time prices were at their highest, reaching 5d. per pound for the former and $4\frac{1}{2}$ d. for the latter. Values were at their lowest during the summer months, when they fell as low as $3\frac{1}{2}$ d. per pound for Canterbury and $3\frac{1}{2}$ d. for North Island, prices considerably lower than any experienced throughout the previous year. The unusual and extremely hot weather prevailing during the four months of June, July, August, and September was accountable for the continuance of such exceptionally depressed markets and low prices as then obtained. The shortage of supplies towards the latter end of the year, together with the expectation of continued small shipments to come forward owing to drought and other scares, caused the advance of prices that then took place. The rise experienced was considerable and continuous until the end of the financial year, resulting in the satisfactory average for the twelve months above mentioned being realised.

The past year has not been notable for any particular change in the markets of this country for New Zealand mutton. Consumption may be considered now to be steady rather than advancing, and is mainly confined to the southern districts of England. Districts served by the steamers of the direct West of England service have not been largely developed so far as the sale of the mutton is concerned.

The quality of the meat has, on the whole, been satisfactory, although as usual there have been complaints of the scarcity of small, meaty carcasses, for which there has at all times been a good and unsatisfied demand. The information given from week to week by cable has kept the producers in the colony well posted up in what has been going on in the mutton-market here during the year.

LAMB.

At the opening of the official year twelve months ago prices for lamb were lower than at the same time of the former year. Commencing at $5\frac{1}{2}$ d. per pound for Canterbury lamb, and $4\frac{1}{2}$ d. for other qualities, an unusually steady quotation ruled until the close of the lamb season, and the extreme fluctuations experienced in the preceding years were wanting. At no time did Canterbury lamb fall below $4\frac{1}{2}$ d. per pound, while that figure only ruled for a fortnight. The new lamb season of this year has opened well. Prices from 6d. to 5d. per pound have been obtained. The average price realised for the year has been 5d. per pound for Canterbury lamb, and 4d. per pound for North Island. Unlike trade in New Zealand mutton, that in lamb is steadily expanding. Lately competition from Australia has been keen, but in spite of this the quantities coming forward from the colony have been going steadily into consumption, stocks being well cleared, and quality giving satisfaction to buyers. I am pleased to report the continued expansion of the lamb trade amongst retail provision-merchants in the provinces, where lines of New Zealand lamb are now quite generally handled and sold. This development of the trade was referred to by me in last year's annual report, and is one of the most pleasing features.

As in the case of mutton, the cablegrams sent weekly have given very full reports concerning the lamb market.

BEEF.

With the exception of a period extending from the end of October to Christmas, when prices of beef were at a satisfactory level, the quotations on the market, while being steadily maintained, have been low. The average for the twelve months has been $3\frac{1}{2}$ d. per pound for hindquarters and $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. for fores—almost identical with those of 1905. The shipments from Argentine, both of chilled and frozen beef, have been heavy. Those from New Zealand, on the other hand, have been light. The market for New Zealand beef in this country continues a small one, with no evidence of expansion. The quality of the meat received during the year has been good, although there have been occasional parcels landed concerning which some complaint has been made. As in the case of mutton and lamb, the weekly cables have recorded the state of the beef-market.

PORK.

Several shipments of pork have been received from New Zealand during the past year, the total number of carcasses being about 2,100. The extremely hot weather prevailing during the season, when the bulk of these carcasses arrived, caused trade in pork to be unusually bad, and necessitated stocks being placed in store and judiciously handled until disposed of. To have rushed them on the market under the prevailing conditions on arrival, sales would have had to be forced, which would have meant sacrificing them. The quality and condition of the pork received was generally satisfactory. When thawed the appearance was good. In the various parcels received the carcasses have been of various sizes. The most saleable weights are from 60 lb. to 80 lb., the demand for the larger ones usually not being so good. Although during the past year all have sold well, a few of the heavier weights have been considered rather fat. The supply of pigs from the Continent has been smaller than usual, and consequently there has been an excellent demand for carcasses suitable for bacon-curing. Of course, the fact that New Zealand pork has to be frozen tells against its sale, and, although the quality is considered quite equal to that coming from America, the price realised is not so high, the latter being merely chilled.

The prices realised for the shipments from the colony have ranged from $4\frac{1}{2}$ d. to $5\frac{1}{2}$ d. per pound, according to weight and quality.

FRAUDULENT MEAT-SALES.

Continuous complaints have been received throughout the past twelve months from all parts of the country concerning the fraudulent sales practised by many traders to the detriment of those anxious to conduct an honest trade in New Zealand meat. The difficulty of obtaining convictions against those who are known to be implicated has been repeatedly pointed out by me. Recently,