

Aird and Co., is expected to be finished in May next. When this new dock is completed the accommodation for vessels in the port of Bristol will be as follows :—

Dock.	Acreage.	Length of Quay.	Area of Shedding.
		Yards.	Square Yards.
City Docks	83	4,898	66,230
Avonmouth Dock	19	1,600	103,000
Royal Edward Dock	30	1,677	46,210
Portishead Dock	12	943	51,491
	144	9,118	266,931

The approach to these docks, by the Bristol Channel, is well buoyed and lighted, and the navigation is both safe and easy. Vessels up to 700 ft. in length, and drawing from 24 ft. to 28 ft. of water, can proceed up to Kingroad Anchorage, within a quarter of a mile of Avonmouth Dock gates, in any weather and state of the tide. For the purposes of New Zealand trade the City Docks may be left out of the calculation; but some particulars of the larger docks will prove of interest.

Avonmouth Dock.

The dimensions of this dock are as follows :—

Depth of water on sill, mean spring tides	...	38 ft.
" " mean neap tides	...	28 ft.
Length of dock	...	2,180 ft.
Width of dock	...	500 ft.
Length of lock	...	485 ft.
Width of lock	...	70 ft.
Width of extension	...	180 ft.
Area of dock	...	19 acres.
Length of wharfage	...	1,600 yards.

The covered quays are provided with railway-lines and hydraulic cranes, so that cargoes can be expeditiously loaded or discharged in all weathers, without suffering any injury. Shed accommodation to the extent of over 900,000 square feet is provided. On the east side of the dock are sheds of a continuous length of 2,000 ft., 140 ft. wide, and fitted with hydraulic cranes with a lifting-power of 30 cwt. each. On the west side are large transit-sheds, with two floors, equipped with five hydraulic cranes of 30-cwt. power and one 15-ton hydraulic crane.

There are cold-stores, with a capacity of 220,000 cubic feet. One of these, used as a transit-shed for frozen meat, is on the quay, and is constructed on the most improved principles for the handling of carcases. During my visit I witnessed the process of unloading a large quantity of meat, and observed how everything is done with the minimum of handling and with absolutely no risk of deterioration from exposure or any other cause. The carcases are delivered from the ship's slings on to the upper floor of the refrigerated shed, where different consignees' lots are sorted out, and are then delivered by shoots right into the railway-trucks, under cover all the time. A grain store and elevator, with a storage-capacity of 50,000 quarters, and every facility for the handling of grain, form part of the equipment of the dock. Other provision for the extensive trade of the port is made here, including a foreign animals' wharf, lairage, and slaughterhouse; a fruit-store and warehouse for the West Indian trade; and oil-tanks with a storage-capacity of 9,000,000 gallons for the reception of petroleum; but, as these do not directly concern New Zealand, it is unnecessary to give a description of them.

Avonmouth is exceptionally well situated in the matter of facilities for the speedy and wide-spread distribution of goods by rail. The Midland and Great Western Railway Companies have stations here, and by means of their lines and others connected with them goods can be conveyed rapidly and conveniently to any part of the United Kingdom. Insulated trucks are provided for the conveyance of meat and other produce of a perishable character, and a perfect network of lines and sidings serves every part of the docks. All these facilities came under my personal inspection during my four days' stay at this port, and I also had an opportunity of observing how speedily and safely large steamers like the "Oswestry Grange" and the "Everton Grange" were docked in the Avonmouth Basin, when four other large steamers, besides smaller craft, occupied berths in it. The dockmaster, Captain Harvey, and his staff showed an expertness that compared most favourably with that displayed by similar officials in other ports I visited.

Royal Edward Dock.

This dock is situated at Avonmouth, immediately adjoining that just described, with which it is connected by a junction-cut 525 ft. long and 85 ft. wide. Its dimensions are as follows :—

Depth of water on inner sill, mean spring tides	...	40 ft.
" " mean neap tides	...	30 ft.
Length of dock	...	1,120 ft.
Width of dock	...	1,000 ft.
Length of lock	...	875 ft.
Width of lock	...	100 ft.
Area of dock	...	30 acres.
Length of wharfage (at present sanctioned)	...	3,730 ft.