

much good would be done by advertising New Zealand meat; the consumer does not care where the meat comes from. The want of insulated cars to take the meat from the ships to the stores in Liverpool causes deterioration. Things are much better managed in London. The trade in boned beef is at present very small in Liverpool; it ought to be as large here as in Glasgow.

The principal of a firm largely engaged in the meat trade said the west-coast service had improved of late, but the steamers are not yet regular and there is too long an interval between some of them. The service should be fortnightly from December to May—or, say, six-weekly in winter and three-weekly in summer. He was anxious to see the direct service maintained, for it enables his firm to save $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per pound on meat that would otherwise be railed from London to Liverpool, and $\frac{5}{16}$ d. per pound on meat railed to Glasgow. The meat is landed in Liverpool from the direct steamers in good condition, though the handling is not nearly so careful as it is in New Zealand. Losses through deterioration fall on the insurance companies, who have large claims made upon them in the summer-time, when the meat suffers most. This leads to a rise in premiums, and the loss ultimately falls on the New Zealand farmer. He believed that from $\frac{1}{8}$ d. to $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per pound is lost in England through careless handling of the meat. His firm had been trying to get the shipping company to load meat for Barry, but this the company declined to do, unless a guarantee of 5,000 carcasses was given. The shipping company has a habit of railing goods from another port to the destination, whenever it suits it to do so. This causes deterioration of the meat, and the practice cancels the insurance policy, compelling the importers to pay an additional premium. He estimated that for 5,000 carcasses landed at the port his firm has 15,000 sent by rail. In their Manchester trade they found that the demand is for small carcasses of mutton and lamb. It is difficult to get shipments of light-weight carcasses from New Zealand, so his firm prefers to have the meat landed at Liverpool, sorted out, and the light carcasses railed to Manchester at a cost of $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per pound.

According to a firm doing a large business in New Zealand and Australian meat and rabbits, retailers are glad to announce New Zealand meat as such, because of its high reputation. They do not now sell inferior meat as New Zealand, but they occasionally sell New Zealand as Scotch or Welsh. In Liverpool there is a good though limited market for the best quality of meat.

Another gentleman in the same trade said that, apart from rail charges, there is a loss incurred in the railing of meat from London. The meat arrives in seeming good condition, and no claim can be made on the underwriters; but it deteriorates afterwards. It might be worth the while of the New Zealand Government to consider the question of subsidising the steamers, so that they would be compelled to call at the different ports and keep time. If importers had confidence as to the arrival of steamers the trade would largely increase. Sometimes, last season, the steamers did not call at Avonmouth, and goods were railed from Cardiff to London, with the result that consignees lost the month's free storage at Avonmouth docks. He had in consequence refused to ship any more goods by the west-coast steamers, unless he has a guarantee that the ship would call at the port. He was charged 10s. to 12s. 6d. a ton more for goods sent to west-coast ports than for goods sent to London, and it suited him better, therefore, to have the goods sent to London. If the condition as to optional railing of goods were removed from the bills of lading it would be better. He finds that Australian rabbits are pushing out the New Zealand, as they are cheaper. In 1900 Britain imported 302,000 crates of New Zealand rabbits, and in 1906 only 94,000 crates. Of Australian rabbits there were imported 300,000 crates in 1900, and in 1906 the import had risen to 900,000 crates.

Dairy-produce.—The principal of a firm extensively engaged in the New Zealand dairy-produce trade said bluntly that the west-coast service is a "humbug." He had known cargo for Liverpool to be taken on to Manchester for five days and then brought back in leisurely fashion. He had great difficulty in persuading the shipping company to let him have some butter out at Manchester, on which he paid railway charges to Liverpool. Late arrival means loss, as the butter-market gradually lowers from Christmas till summer. There are incidental variations in the market, but the average over a series of years is steadily downwards. As to trade custom, he would prefer the consignment system, if he could rely on shipments being sent regularly. It would pay the New Zealand dairy companies to consign to established and reputable firms, as competition would compel the latter to do their best for the consignees. The bulk of the Irish creameries consign their produce. The Danes tried selling for a time, but are now taking more and more to consignment. He was sure consignment would be best in the long-run for New Zealand producers. If thought necessary, the Government or the dairy companies might appoint some one in England to look after their interests. The objection to weekly or fortnightly sales of butter in New Zealand is to be found in the preference that the retailers in England have for a certain brand or mark of goods—the consumers wish to have the same goods all the time. For this reason, he found the system of buying the season's output right out was advantageous, for his firm got 1s. to 2s. per hundredweight more for butter of known brands. The advantage of the consignment system is that goods are kept nearer to the market value, and thus the demand might increase. At the beginning of last season his firm anticipated a shortage in the supply of butter; but, though that anticipation had been realised, they had had ruinously low prices, mainly the result of fraudulent increase in bulk—to the extent of about 10s. per hundredweight—which had disturbed the market. Saltless butter, he said, will keep better than salted if inferior salt is used. He preferred butter to have $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 per cent. of salt. Preservatives may still be necessary, but not so much so if pure salt were used. The "fishiness" found in some brands of butter he considered to be due to the inferior salt used. The packing of New Zealand butter is excellent, and he had advised the Irish dairies to copy the system. The grading is not strict enough. Some brands certified as first grade vary as much as 5s. per hundredweight, or 1d. per pound retail. As regards cheese, Canadian is preferred for the Liverpool market. New Zealand cheese is too stiff for the Lancashire