

The following table gives the quantities of butter imported into the United Kingdom for the twelve months ended 30th April, 1912 :—

TABLE No. 44.

					Tons.	Per Cent.
Denmark	..	..	..	..	83,339	40·13
Australia	..	..	..	..	38,221	18·41
Siberia	..	..	..	..	31,422	15·13
Sweden	..	..	..	..	17,709	8·53
New Zealand	..	..	..	..	14,720	7·09
France	..	..	..	..	7,971	3·84
Other countries	..	..	..	..	14,272	6·87
Total	..	..	..	..	207,654	100

The imports of cheese into the United Kingdom were,—

TABLE No. 45.

				Canada.	New Zealand.
Year ending 30th June, 1908	..	..	..	81,428	13,152
„ 1909	..	..	..	76,402	16,572
„ 1910	..	..	..	79,661	22,651
„ 1911	..	..	..	76,457	20,256
Year ending 30th April, 1912	..	..	..	72,495	23,644

The following table gives the exports of butter (in tons) from the three principal countries in the Southern Hemisphere during the last three years :—

TABLE No. 46.

			1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.
Argentina	..	..	2,716	416	160
Australia	..	..	29,252	44,656	32,246
New Zealand	..	..	16,609	16,956	17,147

In comparing the above figures it is necessary to point out that the Argentine quantities are for years ending 1910 and 1911. The 1912 figures include only the months of January to March, inclusive. In regard to Australia, the period included in each year is from the 1st July to the 30th April, and in the case of New Zealand from the 1st May to the 30th April. The Argentine for the present is not an important factor in the world's supply of butter. Australia shows this year a decrease of 12,410 tons as compared with 1911, whilst New Zealand is practically stationary.

3. These tables afford no indication that the demand for our foodstuffs is decreasing in the United Kingdom. Moreover, there is a probability that further markets may ultimately be available to our producers. Recent reports state that the movement in favour of cheaper meat-supplies continues to gather force in the principal European countries, and frozen meat may now be said to have gained a footing, though a somewhat insecure one, on the Continent. The Italian Government has accepted frozen meat in its army contracts, and Italian buyers imported 12,000 tons of frozen meat last year in spite of the heavy duty ; but the importation of meat into Austria-Hungary has been stopped altogether. In France the law admits of the importation of only selected cuts of beef, and insists, in the case of mutton, that the carcasses shall be cut into quarters before passing the Customs ; and this restriction must confine the trade to very narrow limits. Since the Swiss elections last year were fought on the cheap-food question, Switzerland has reduced the Customs duty from 25 to 10 francs per 100 kilos, but transit difficulties have been raised by both the French and the Austrian authorities, and these are hampering the trade. So that up to the present we have to rely mainly on the English market as an outlet for our supplies of frozen meat, and in that country the Argentine competition for the lamb trade is steadily increasing ; her exports of lambs increased over 150 per cent. between 1910 and 1911. In 1911 her exports amounted to 890,865 carcasses, compared with 352,501 in 1901, which constitutes a fresh record for that country. New Zealand showed only a small increase in