

Considerable interest was aroused, both in this country and abroad, by a report that a consignment of Australian frozen meat, complying with the sanitary regulations in every respect, had been successfully imported into Germany early in January of this year. Careful inquiries were made, and it was ascertained that the parcel in question consisted of one hundred carcasses which had been forwarded by Messrs. W. Weddel and Co. (Limited) to their agents in Bremen. Half the meat went to Berlin and half to Chemnitz, and quality and condition were quite satisfactory from a consumer's point of view. Full details as ascertained were duly forwarded to the Government. At a later date a further shipment was made, but with the approach of warmer weather the business was dropped for the season, the demand for mutton in Germany not being very large. Inquiries were received at this office from Belgian and German firms who had seen the reports of these shipments, and the opportunity was taken of placing before them full details of the sanitary and slaughtering regulations in force in the Dominion, as well as information as to the quality, &c., of New Zealand meat.

*Switzerland.*—In last year's report I referred to the fact that permission had been granted for the importation, experimentally, of certain quantities of frozen meat into Switzerland. At the end of March last the matter was fully discussed by the Federal Council in connection with the inquiry as to the steps required to be taken to combat the increase in the cost of living. At that time the experimental consignments had been selling well, and, in the words of H.M. Chargé d'Affaires at Berne, "it looked as if frozen meat had come to stay." The Upper House, however, declined to reduce the duty as had been urged, but the importation was taken out of the experimental stage, and was permitted without restriction or special authorization.

Later on several alterations were made tending to facilitate the entry of imported meat, such, for instance, as permitting oversea consignments to go right through to their destinations without frontier inspection; and, still later, the duty was lowered from 25 francs to 10 francs per 100 kilos, as desired by the people. Since then the trade appears to have been conducted quite smoothly in every way, and it will be seen that a good step forward has been made during the year.

*Austria.*—There has been, unfortunately, a set-back in the importation of frozen meat into Austria during the official year now closed, the agrarian party in the National Parliament having rejected proposals for the unrestricted importation of oversea meat and cattle. H.B. Minister in Vienna reported in October last that some of the Argentine meat that had been imported under the temporary permission had not proved satisfactory to the people, and no doubt this fact helped the agrarians in their action. The desire of the working-classes for cheaper food is therefore still unsatisfied, and no further alteration in the Government's policy has been made, or seems likely for some time.

*Spain.*—The Board of Trade early in the present year issued a white-paper containing a translation of the new Customs tariff of Spain, which came into force at the beginning of 1912. From this it was noted that the duty on fresh or frozen meat had been reduced to 12 pesetas per 100 kilos, instead of 14 pesetas as formerly. In view of this special mention, and as, according to the information received from the British Minister last year, frozen meat was not allowed to enter Spain, a communication was sent to Madrid asking whether any revision of the regulations governing the importation had been made by the Government. The Secretary in charge of commercial matters at the Embassy in reply stated that he had had a conversation with the Director-General of Customs on the subject, and learnt that the question of permitting the importation of frozen meat was then under discussion by the Ministry of the Interior. No indication was given as to the probable result of the discussion, but he promised to forward full particulars of any decision come to.

*Sweden.*—In March, 1911, the Swedish Board of Trade made public its opinion on the proposals of the Expert Committee for the Control of Imported Meats, and full particulars were received from the British Minister at Stockholm. The Board considered that the provision requiring meat imported into Sweden to be accompanied by certain organs should not be approved, as this would render impossible the importation of frozen meat from transoceanic countries. No information has since come to hand as to whether this objection to the proposal of the Committee has been maintained, but doubtless you will hear in due course what has been done in the matter. From our point of view it is hoped that the Board of Trade will be able to carry through their objection, as a way will thus be opened for the introduction of New Zealand meat. The chief difficulty in that connection, however, would be the lack of steamship connections between the Dominion and Sweden.

*Russia.*—No change has occurred in the official attitude, and, according to the British Minister at St. Petersburg, no alterations in the tariff are likely to take place before the expiration of the Berlin Convention in July, 1914.

Last month the Government requested that inquiries be made regarding the prospects of opening up trade with Japan in New Zealand meats. The Japanese Consul-General in London was communicated with, and I also wrote to a friend of mine, a member of a firm of merchants having branches in Yokohama and Kobe. From the information supplied prospects would appear to be hopeful.

#### WOOL.

As indicated already, there have been many disquieting events in the industrial and political worlds during the past twelvemonth. Added to these factors, it has to be noted that supplies of wool have been quite up to average, a slight increase over 1910 figures being recorded, the total, however, not reaching the 1909 imports. Once again American support, if not entirely lacking, has been practically so through the greater part of the year, the United States taking only sixteen thousand to seventeen thousand bales during the twelvemonth. Manufacturers at home, how-