### Fraudulent Meat-sales.

As mentioned in my last report, a case was brought under your notice which looked likely to result in a conviction being obtained by the Government against a firm of shipping butchers in Liverpool for substituting Australian for New Zealand mutton in the fulfilment of a contract for the supply of meat to an American steamship company. Proceedings were taken, and evidence was given on our behalf that Burnside Freezing Company's tags had been applied to the carcases. An order was obtained from the Magistrate for the examination of books of the cold-store where the meat had been stored, for the purpose of tracing the carcases, and after a good deal of trouble practically the whole of them were traced. The defence, however, stated that the entries in their books did not refer to these special sheep, and finally the Magistrate decided that no *prima facie* case had been made out, and dismissed the charge. It is significant, however, to note that he disallowed defendant's costs. I am glad to state that apparently the action had some good effect, as I learned later that the contractor had given strict orders to his storekeepers that in future all carcases were to retain their original tags and bags. This case is another instance of the insuperable difficulties experienced in bringing fradulent traders to book.

### Grain.

#### *Wheat.*

The wheat-market during the year has been generally quiet, with prices on a reasonable level, and for the most part firm. Sellers in the Dominion have been firm in their demands, and consequently business at this end, especially for forward shipment, has been rather restricted. During the first half of the period supplies were small, and, although demand was not brisk, prices were fairly steady. Early in March, long-berried wheat was fetching about 33s. per 496 lb. ex granary, with short-berried about 1s. lower, and only about 6d. or 1s. variation occurred during the succeeding two months.

The wheat-harvest in this country was one of the earliest on record, commencing about the middle of July and finishing practically before the end of August. The crop, as might have been expected, was of excellent quality and in fine condition, while the yield was also a good one. As Home supplies began to be marketed, the New Zealand offerings were more or less neglected, and prices fell away. European crops turned out light, but those in Argentina and Australia were well-conditioned and above the average. Business in new-crop New Zealand wheat was slow at about 35s. 6d. for long-berried and 34s. for short-berried. In February, with decreasing stocks in this country, and comparatively small shipments afloat, spot parcels met a better demand, and a small business was done at 37s. 6d. and 37s. for New Zealand long- and short-berried wheat respectively. The official year closed with the market firm, owing to reduced supplies, and with quotations at about 38s. 6d. and 37s. 6d.

#### *Oats.*

Taking the year through, New Zealand oats have been in small supply, and have met a very good inquiry. Prices at the beginning of March were 19s. 6d. for sparrowbills and 17s. for Danish, and after a temporary fall towards the beginning of April, owing to a reduced demand, rates gradually firmed up, till in the middle of December 23s. 6d. and 19s. 6d. were the current quotations. January saw the market firm, with a good demand for all descriptions, owing to short supplies, and by the end of February New Zealand stocks were practically exhausted. The year closed with a small supply then in store being offered at about 26s. 6d. for sparrowbills, but this price was more or less nominal, no business being reported, though the market was firm and steady.

#### *Peas.*

The market for peas has ruled very quiet during the year, supplies being plentiful and the demand dull. Prices have shown a continuous decline, commencing at 44s. per 504 lb. for New Zealand partridge peas, and gradually falling to 39s. during June and July, when the market was overstocked and depressed. Some little improvement took place towards the end of the year, and in November business in the new crop for shipment in March and April was reported at 38s. 6d. c.i.f. Since the beginning of 1912 about 39s. ex store has been the quotation. Supplies, however, have generally exceeded the demand, and at the close of the twelvemonth the nominal quotation was 38s., with a tendency in favour of buyers.

#### *Beans.*

For the first six months of the official year the market for beans ruled decidedly on the quiet side. Holders were firm, and only a small business was done. New Zealand beans were in limited supply, however, and quotations varied between 35s. and 34s. per 504 lb. on spot, according to demand. Supplies during August were very scarce, so that during the following month prices firmed up, and demand for the small quantities offering was good. In the middle of December 36s. per quarter was the quotation, with a firm market. By the beginning of February New Zealand stocks were practically exhausted, the value being nominally 37s. 6d. per 504 lb. ex store. The last cabled quotations for the period gave 38s. as the nominal value, there being a good inquiry.

#### *Linseed.*

Early in the year the Department of Agriculture informed you that the cultivation of linseed was extending in certain districts in the Dominion, and requested information regarding the market for it here. I accordingly made inquiry and reported fully as to prices, conditions, and future prospects. Some years ago shipments of New Zealand linseed were handled in London,