

The following are some figures which will show in some cases the amount of frozen meat imported into the Continental countries:—

Italy: In 1909 the imports consisted of 1,800 tons; this in 1911 had grown to 7,790 tons, and estimated figures for the year 1912 are 15,000 tons.

France: Little or no frozen meat is imported into France, with the exception of shipments from South America to Havre. These amount to about 25,000 carcasses per annum for consumption in France, and in addition to these a certain number are imported for ships' stores, but the extent of the latter I have not ascertained.

Switzerland: In 1911 frozen meat to the weight of 1,095 tons was imported, and in 1912 2,370 tons.

Germany: No regular imports are made into this country, but within the last two years a few experimental shipments of mutton from Australia have been made.

Fixing Tags on Meat by Means of Seals.

This is a matter to which I have also given consideration. There is no doubt that meat from other countries is substituted for New Zealand, although it is always difficult to prove this in a Court of law. If our tags were sealed on, detection would be rendered much more easy, and the amount of substitution would be greatly lessened, more especially in connection with supplies to public institutions, shipping companies, &c. A great amount of New Zealand meat is asked for by various public bodies. For instance, forty-two institutions (Boards of Guardians, hospitals, &c.) consume no less than 61,250 sheep and 7,600 lambs annually, and this is only a very small portion of the amount annually used throughout the country by similar bodies. If our tags were sealed on, and we had the co-operation of the various bodies, we could be sure that New Zealand meat would be supplied when tendered for. It would only be necessary for the various bodies to call for whole carcasses or undivided pairs of legs with the original tag on one of them, and, as this is frequently done at present, it would assist materially. The cost would be very small in proportion to the value of our meat-output, and I consider the benefits would be great. The use of seals would also safeguard our Inspectors in New Zealand, and might, moreover, be an important factor in the opening-up of a Continental trade.

The condemnations of New Zealand meat have been neither frequent nor large, the veterinary inspection in New Zealand has been efficient, as is indicated by the absence of condemnations for disease at this end, and, with a few exceptions, the vessels have arrived here with their meat cargoes in good order.

During the year ending 31st March, 1913, four steamers from New Zealand have discharged damaged frozen meat, the damage being attributable to some fault of the ship or stowage, but none of these cases have been serious nor have the condemnations been great.

Condemnation of Kidneys.

Great improvement in this matter has taken place. For the period 1911–12 no less than 18,569 dozen sheep and lamb kidneys were condemned, while for the period now under review the number reported on was only 3,688 dozen.

Bone-taint in Beef.

I am pleased to be able to report that the condemnations due to the presence of bone-taint have materially decreased. Some years ago the loss from this trouble was very heavy, some parcels having 25 per cent. of them affected. In 1911–12 over 30,000 lb. of beef was condemned, while for the present year the returns only show a little over 8,000 lb. All the same, every effort should be made to eliminate this cause of condemnation, as, apart from the actual monetary loss, the fact of bone-taint being found in beef from certain works prejudices the future sale of meat from that source.

Boneless Beef.

During the past few years there has been a gradual increase in the amount of boneless beef shipped from New Zealand to this country, and this increase is especially marked during the year under consideration. In 1910–11 only 3,362 packages arrived; in 1911–12 this had increased to between 4,000 and 5,000; while for the present year the returns show that about 22,000 bags of boneless beef arrived in this country from New Zealand.

A good demand exists for boneless beef in Scotland, and prices are obtained which must be remunerative to the shipper.

The greatest fault found with this meat is distortion in packing, the various cuts being rolled or folded, instead of being frozen in, as near as possible, their natural shape. Out of the 22,000 packages arriving this year, over 6,000 were unsatisfactory, and, although none were actually condemned, some had to be thawed out for the examination of the Inspectors here, and this would lead to deterioration. Some packers in New Zealand do their work well, and their meat is in good demand at higher prices than that from other sources, in the latter case the buyer having to risk the loss through non-compliance with the regulations. I would strongly advise that all the requirements be complied with if shippers wish to redevelop this trade.

Damaged Meat.

A considerable amount of damage is evident in New Zealand meat by the time it is exposed for sale. I am not referring to such great damage as might occur as through, say, a breakdown in machinery, but more to deterioration noticed in almost every parcel, due to defective handling, and consisting of such as broken shanks, heel-marks, chafing, dirtiness, off-colour and