

*Hops.*

The market for New Zealand hops in this country for the past year has been rather better than usual. There have not, however, been many lots offered. The few shipments that came under my notice passed direct into consumption on account of the purchasers, and were valued at time of arrival at from £9 10s. to £10 per hundredweight. Brewers in this country have not been keen to do business in New Zealand hops. Possibly this has arisen from prejudice on their part, owing to lack of knowledge as to the character and quality of the hops. Prices recently ruling have been much lower than last year, and shippers must be prepared to accept, for any lots sent forward this season, lower prices than those mentioned above.

During the year a small but excellent sample of hops grown in the Nelson District was received and exhibited at the Brewers' Exhibition, being awarded a Diploma of Merit. These samples were very favourably commented upon. Numerous inquiries were made regarding the prospect of trade with the Dominion, and merchants and others making these inquiries were placed in communication with growers in New Zealand.

*Honey.*

Several shipments of New Zealand honey have come forward, and a number of these have come under my notice. While, owing to the wet and dull summer experienced in this country during 1912, there has been a fair steady demand for honey, prices realized have not been high. The quality of the parcels that have been landed has been satisfactory, but the price realized has only been about 40s. per hundredweight. The system of packing generally adopted—two tins of 56 lb. each being placed in a wooden case—has been suitable to the trade. Evidently shippers have wisely come to the conclusion that it is more advantageous to ship honey in this form than in small tins with individual growers' labels fixed on them. While the price realized may not prove so remunerative as might be expected by beekeepers in the Dominion, and although the advance made towards the establishment of a regular trade cannot be said to have been great, it is evident that with regularity of shipments and the maintenance of quality a good trade might ultimately be established, and possibly prices might improve as the demand is increased.

*Eggs.*

During the year several shipments of eggs from New Zealand have been received on the London market. They arrived in satisfactory condition, and realized prices that compared favourably with those paid for other varieties of eggs on the market. The price of eggs during the past year has been above the average commonly received for consignments. It is doubtful, however, whether such values will be maintained during the coming year. Reports concerning the various shipments were made to Wellington, but it is questionable whether a regular payable trade in eggs can be established between New Zealand and this country.

*Apples.*

Early in the year a shipment of apples arrived in the s.s. "Kaipara," and were landed in good order and condition. The quality of the apples, however, was disappointing, and as a sample of what New Zealand can produce was unsatisfactory. It should have been possible, by the exercise of more care in selection and grading, to have placed on the market here a shipment which would have reflected greater credit on the fruit resources of the Dominion. The average price realized was about 7s. per case. There is undoubtedly a market here for good fruit such as New Zealand can produce, but, of course, as in many other lines, good prices are only obtainable for the best quality, of which the Dominion ought to be able to send forward a considerable supply.

The market for apples on the Continent, especially in Germany, is said to be a good one, and a report on the markets there was forwarded to the Government.

Although no information has been received from Wellington concerning apple shipments for the coming season, it is understood from reports appearing in the newspapers that no shipments to this country will be made, as any lots available for shipment have been purchased for consignment to South America. It is to be regretted that the initial shipments of apples from New Zealand have not been followed up, as spasmodic consignments to the London market are not appreciated by buyers there, and the opportunity is lost for establishing a market with a demand at satisfactory prices. Trial or individual shipments never reach high figures—they are generally purchased at job-lot prices.

*Kauri-gum.*

Shipments of kauri-gum from New Zealand have been coming forward in pretty regular quantity during the past year. The trade has been quiet and steady, and little fluctuation in price has taken place on the market. A good deal of the gum shipped to London is re-exported to the United States and to the Continent. Germany and Russia are the two chief Continental countries using it. The supply of finer grades has lately shown a falling-off, and values of three-quarter-scraped and half-scraped gums have consequently been particularly firm. Stocks in London are at present lower than they have been for some time, and it is not anticipated that values will recede. Those closely identified with the trade anticipate a rise in prices for finer grades.

I have, &c.,

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Produce Commissioner.

The High Commissioner for New Zealand, London.

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