

Superintendent of Public Instruction, the State Forestry Commissioner. It contains collections which are arranged under the following heads: Manufactured articles—(a) Arranged in lines of manufacture. Raw products—(a) Geographic arrangement of collections; (b) Monographic arrangement of collections.

In addition to these, there are very interesting collections designed to show what goods are saleable in each country by grouping together the main articles of consumption in such countries. For instance, in one case you would see the articles of dress most commonly used in a country like Brazil, in South America. In another, the tools and cutlery in daily use in the Argentine or Peru. In that way the American exporter is able to learn from ocular evidence what the peculiarities of the markets in such countries are.

I believe the number of samples of foreign merchandise in the collection alone is about seventy-five thousand. I made inquiries with regard to one or two New Zealand raw products which command a market in the United States. Their exhibit of our native flax and the dressed fibre thereof was neither complete nor attractive, and I have arranged to send more representative samples. In the same way their specimens of kauri-gum were neither large nor numerous enough to appeal properly to the eye, and I am therefore arranging to have their place taken by better examples.

Even more interesting than the Commercial Museum is the Commercial Library, which is placed in a large and well-lighted room, and seems to be made full use of. The number of books, magazines, pamphlets, and papers relating to the trade and products of the world there brought together is, at first sight, astonishing. Connecting with this is, perhaps, the most useful feature of the whole Museum, the bureau of information. This is the channel through which the knowledge collected in the Museum is distributed throughout the States. A staff of clerks is employed in reading the books and pamphlets which are brought into the Exhibition, and in indexing them up, or making extracts from them. In addition to this, a large correspondence is maintained with Consuls, Boards of Trade, and advisory agents in different places. By means of a system of card indexes it is rendered easy to get at the information relating to each trade and each country, and even to learn the names of the principal firms throughout the world. Thus an inquirer who desires particulars about suitable agencies or trading or manufacturing firms in any one of the five continents is fairly certain to get them without delay. That, however, is not all. The information bureau has a very large circle of business subscribers. These pay to it an annual subscription of about £10. In return for this they have not only the right of having all inquiries they make at the bureau promptly and fully answered, but the bureau, without waiting for inquiries, sends them at once any information relating to their lines of business which its reading staff and corresponding staff may light upon in the course of their investigations. It is obvious that not even a very large and wealthy private firm can afford or hope to have access to such an immense number of sources of information as the bureau and its clerks have at their disposal, and it is easy to see that if properly carried out its work must be of widespread value. I understand that trustworthy information as regards the general credit and position of foreign firms is supplied, in confidence, to the Museum's subscribers. The rule made by the bureau in supplying information is, I believe, to answer the first question asked them by any correspondent gratis, but to intimate that if further information is wanted a fee will have to be paid. This, however, is only in the case of information supplied by writing. Any one in Philadelphia who has a *bonâ fide* question to ask about business, and who will personally go to the bureau, will be told anything the officers know, without charge or payment of any kind.

The bureau furnishes to its subscribers cards, on which are printed the names of all prominent firms in their trade in any foreign town with which the subscribers may wish to begin business. The bureau, however, does not wait for firms to apply to become subscribers, but canvasses amongst the business-men of the States in various ways, amongst others by sending cards to them upon which the following questions are printed: Are you prepared to do an export trade? If so, in what particular line or lines of goods? Are you manufacturing any articles specially for export? Are you now interested in exporting to any particular countries? How long and to what extent have you been engaged in export trade? In what countries have you attempted to secure export trade without success? What were the reasons you were unable to secure export trade? Do you issue any catalogues or other printed matter in foreign languages?

While in Philadelphia I visited what is called the Bureau of Publicity of the National Association of Manufacturers of the United States. In many respects this association discharges the functions which in New Zealand are attended to by chambers of commerce. It watches the legislation of Congress in the interests of trade and also endeavours to promote fresh legislation. It has recently, for instance, actively bestirred itself to procure the passing of an Act to secure the establishment of a special department of trade and commerce. Outside parliamentary work it bestirs itself in such matters as the freight charges on the American railways, and has been working lately in the endeavour to have these made uniform. But the main object of this association, like that of the Commercial Museum, is to foster and increase the foreign trade of the States. To this end it not only publishes and disseminates amongst its subscribers every sort of leaflet and information printed and written relating to the condition of trade, and the credit of traders in foreign countries and cities, but will go so far as to send committees or commissioners of investigation to visit foreign countries and report upon the possibilities of increasing trade there. I was particularly struck with the excellence of the card and index system of their bureau and the speed with which information could be got relating to any branch of commerce, and to any spot in the civilised or uncivilised world.

With this report I have the honour to transmit a considerable number of documents relating to the Commercial Museum and to the National Association of Manufacturers aforesaid. This, I trust, will be of interest and service to the Department of Trade and Commerce.