

grass-seed, fruit-pulp, leather, milk, and various other of our products have been taken in larger or smaller quantities, and the possibilities of trade in many of these articles are very great.

The vessel at present loading in these waters has on board some 70 tons of ground pumice, which is being taken as a trial shipment for insulation purposes. Another order has been placed for this article. The same vessel has loaded from Auckland about 50,000 ft. of kauri, in which a good trade is almost sure to result.

Africa is also taking as much live-stock as the boats can carry, no fewer than 12,750 sheep, besides horses and cows, having left our shores up to date, while the space is engaged in the vessel at present loading for 4,000 sheep and 80 cows.

Passengers to the number of 130 have availed themselves of the subsidised line. The nine steamers which have been despatched have made no less than forty-seven calls at New Zealand ports at which to load, visiting African ports for discharge twenty-eight times.

The expenditure of money in New Zealand in connection with the running of the new line of steamers means considerable gain to the colony. The different Harbour Boards will benefit to the extent of about £7,500 per annum. The boats are disbursing at the yearly rate of £7,000 for labour and £6,000 for stores.

Besides the African trade, the steamers under contract to the Government have developed a considerable business with Western Australia. Several lines of live and frozen sheep have been landed at Fremantle, and the export of produce generally to that seaport has been stimulated.

One satisfactory feature of the African trade is that virtually all the money paid in exchange for our products has been transferred to the colony before the goods actually left our shores. It may be noted that the "Essex," which sailed in June, carried away one of the largest cargoes, if not the very largest, which has ever left New Zealand, measuring between 11,000 and 12,000 tons, exclusive, of course, of live-stock, the total value being about £70,000.

The steamers engaged in the service have all been fine ships, with abnormally large accommodation for frozen meat. Two of the later ones, and the next steamer (the "Suffolk"), are twin-screw boats, over 7,000 tons register, fitted with roomy up-to-date passenger accommodation, and it is hoped that the trade will have so developed that these larger vessels will be justified in continuing in the service. A commercial agent for New Zealand is now permanently residing in South Africa, with headquarters at Durban, where his services are available for supplying commercial information relative to trade between New Zealand and South Africa.

The values of shipments to South African ports were as follows—Frozen cargo, £334,267; general cargo, £78,340; live-stock, £9,922: and to Western Australia, £8,533. Further particulars appear in the tables appended hereto.

IMMIGRATION: INCREASED POPULATION.

The advantage of having an increased population no well-wisher of our colony can deny. How this can be obtained without resorting to an assisted-immigration scheme demands our immediate and best attention.

As the result of meeting Indian officers, both here and during my return journey from London, and of correspondence which I opened up with retired officers with reference to settling here, a few pioneers have already arrived, and are settling in the North; and I am sure if our climate and its adaptability were better known in India a much larger number would come. As these officers enjoy pensions and have moderate means, it is well to encourage this class of settler. To further this, I am of opinion that communication should be opened up with the principal military stations in India. The fullest information should be supplied, and I am satisfied there are many who would be only too glad to make New Zealand their home, for the reason that they have a difficulty in maintaining their station in England, whilst here they could live for much less and enjoy better health and more comfort. Our handbook is in great demand in military quarters.