

(No. 46.)



1896.

SESSION II.

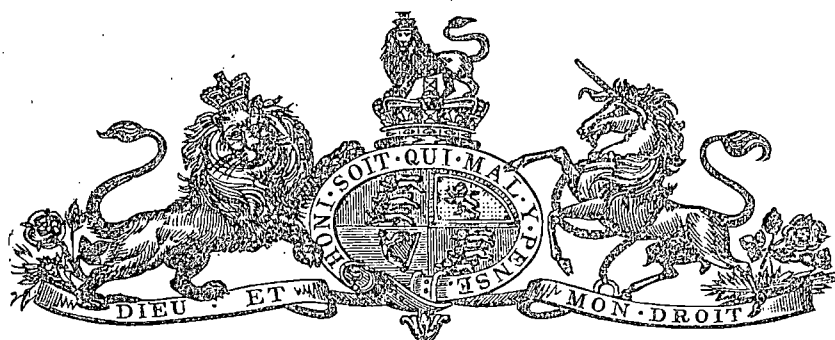
PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

TRADE WITH THE UNITED KINGDOM :

MEMORANDUM FROM THE HONORABLE THE TREASURER.

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by His Excellency's Command.

Cost of printing—£7.



*The Treasury,
Hobart, 24th June, 1896.*

MEMORANDUM for the Honorable the Premier, in reply to letter of Sir R. H. G. Herbert, Agent-General, accompanying the Circular Despatch of the Right Honorable the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Joseph Chamberlain, to His Excellency the Governor of the Colony, on the subject of Trade with the United Kingdom.

With attention arrested by the importance of the subject, I have delayed my response until now with a view to placing you with information gathered from the traders in the many departments covered by the wide definition "British Colonial Trade."

Although the denominations of goods to which attention is directed follow those under which all statistical information for trade purposes is prepared, and are most generally in agreement with those used by the Board of Trade, I found it impossible to take up denominations and attach from our import entries the money value to the individual articles embraced therein; for example, the sub-divisions of our statistical returns do not enable any reliable separation for purpose of value of Haberdashery from Millinery, nor of British from Foreign manufacture, and neither Customs nor Chambers of Commerce, to all of which my enquiries have been addressed, could enable me to compile returns which I can send with any hope that Mr. Secretary Chamberlain can place complete reliance upon them: yet he may be able to form conclusions which, while in detail are not correct, may, in the concrete, be of value.

To secure the most accurate information I have instituted enquiries by experts of the leading wholesale and retail traders both at Hobart and Launceston, and have obtained the information almost from door to door, but, limited as it is, it is yet of more value than any information our Customs Entries for Home Consumption can give.

These enquiries have occupied much time, with very little to show for them; but I am of opinion that the course of trade in this smaller community is a fair indication of trade in the larger communities of Australasia, and that the conclusions arrived at here, after minute enquiries, is a fairer index of the character and movements of trade generally than any conclusions formed from purely official statistical returns.

All customs entries are noteworthy incorrect in value sterling, and the record of country of exports very misleading, and no indication as to the country of manufacture. Where the most definite answers are given from published returns to Mr. Secretary Chamberlain's enquiries, I venture to state the least reliance can be placed upon them.

Estimates very possibly approximate to the value of the trade may be supplied, but the description of the article accompanying that value will be very defective, and especially so in disclosing the country of manufacture.

Paragraph 3 of Mr. Secretary Chamberlain's despatch of 28 November, 1895, deals with value of the trade, and reasons which weigh with colonial importers for their preference for a foreign article. Both enquiries have been in mind in preparing the return which I have the honor to attach. To another branch of enquiry, viz., that of paragraph 7, "Products which might advantageously be exported to United Kingdom, &c., but which do not at present find a sufficient market there," a separate schedule is enclosed. In that schedule wheat finds a place; but it is without, on my part, any belief in the utility of considering how Australasia can enter into successful competition with Wisconsin, Manitoba, Egypt, India, and the Danubian Principalities. Wheat at Liverpool at the price of last year, 20s. to 24s. per quarter, could not be displaced by Australasia even with a differential duty of 4s. per quarter in its favour, and the statement repeated by Mr. Lowles, M.P. for Haggestown, on the authority of a Canadian statesman, that 1s. per quarter would turn the course of trade, does not apply to us.

The chief products of Tasmania for which British markets should be satisfactorily sought are Butter, Cheese, Fruit, Hops, Bark, Timber; other Tasmanian products have already a possession of those markets which cannot be improved upon.

The general question of United Empire trade is to Australasia premature, as it means practically Free Trade. There is no other colony of this group than New South Wales which is likely to raise sufficient revenue from sources of direct taxation and land, and to abandon or even to materially differentiate Customs dues with United Kingdom must be deferred to a more convenient season. The "better terms" asked for than Canada offered for a preferential trade with United Kingdom are unlikely to be negotiated, attractive though the purpose be. We all profess to aim at securing that which is in the highest degree advantageous to the welfare and prosperity of the Empire, but self-preservation is the first law of nature, and necessitates in these integral parts of the Empire the maintenance for the present by individual colonies of high *ad valorem* duties. Neither if they would, could the value of the United Kingdom's trade with its colonies and possessions grow to such proportions as to compensate for the jeopardy of that far larger trade enjoyed by the United Kingdom with foreign countries. The mission of Mr. Lowles, M.P. for Haggestown and Member of the United Empire Trade League, is *à propos* of this general subject, and has been of a pleasing character, but cannot, I fear, secure any important results. The purpose of the League, like that disclosed by Mr. Secretary Chamberlain's despatch, is attractive, but the results likely to prove discouraging.

P. O. FYSH, *Treasurer.*

IMPORTS INTO TASMANIA, 1895.

It is impossible to give years 1884, 1889, and 1894 separately, or to place the value or description under headings "from Foreign Countries" or "Foreign Countries imported from." The whole of Tasmania's imports came through "British sources."

3. APPAREL AND SLOPS. In such articles of wearing apparel as kid gloves, fabric gloves, laces, embroideries, Swiss muslins, ribbons, and felt hats, the Foreign goods are preferred to the British in that they are more slightly, much finer, of better finish, and in the case of hats and gloves a superior and faster dye is apparent, and they can be produced cheaper.
- The proportion of Foreign imports to British would be, approximately, two-thirds Foreign, one-third British.
- Slops are entirely confined to Great Britain, with the exception of oil goods, which are chiefly of American manufacture, and are imported not so much on account of better value, as they are about equal to British, but because freight and insurance from America is so much less.
14. CEMENT. Cements are entirely of British production.
18. CLOCKS AND WATCHES. The bulk of the cheap clocks imported are chiefly American manufacture, being much better got up, superior in appearance, and considerably lower in price than the British article. Lower and medium grades in watches are nearly all of Swiss and American manufacture, the British article being almost entirely cut out of the market, though in the high grades the British manufactured articles are still preferred—very few good watches being imported. The Foreign trade might be estimated at about eighty per cent.
20. ROPE, CORDAGE AND WIRE ROPE. Entirely British.
23. COTTON MANUFACTURES. Germany has largely increased her trade in this Colony in all classes of hosiery, and is seriously injuring the trade of Great Britain; in low grades she is almost unrivalled, most of the British merchants obtaining their cheap hosiery from Germany,—in fact, you will scarcely find an English merchant whose shelves do not contain German hosiery, both high and low class goods. In cotton and cashmere they are equal in quality, and much better value than can be obtained in the home market. The trade with Germany in this branch is steadily increasing, and must have advanced fifty per cent. in the last ten years. The only line that is likely to displace "British goods" in printed cottons is printed flannelettes, which are manufactured in an endless variety of patterns in low qualities, which are selling very freely.
24. EARTHEN AND CHINAWARE. British goods still take the lead here, but are gradually being superseded by the German, especially in the cheaper lines of earthenwares such as candlesticks, vases, household crockery, &c. The principal feature being better and newer designs, cleaner finish, fresh colourings, and are generally all round much better value; the proportion of trade being sixty per cent. British, forty per cent. Foreign, with the Foreign trade on the increase.
26. FURNITURE. The importations of furniture are very small, being principally confined to wood and cane-bottom chairs from America, and bent-wood furniture from Austria. Britain is not a competitor in this trade. Other classes of furniture are principally of Colonial manufacture.
27. GLASS. (a) All the plate and fancy coloured glass imported to this Colony is of British manufacture.
- (a) Plate, rough, silvered. (b) and (c) Entirely British.
- (b) Flint.
- (c) Common bottles. (d) Whilst the importations of sheet glass consist almost entirely of Belgian manufactured goods; the reason for this is that the Belgian glass is cheaper, and can be laid down for considerably less.
- (d) Other sorts.

29. HABERDASH-
ERY AND MIL-
LINERY. American and German haberdashery in metal goods, such as buckles, buttons, crochet-hooks, hair-pins, safety-pins, hooks and eyes, is the most sought after, American patent lines chiefly. In both cases they are much better value than similar lines manufactured in Britain; the same applies to wools, braids, and bindings.

The Millinery imported into this Colony is almost exclusively of English manufacture.

30. HARDWARE &
CUTLERY. America is at present doing the best business in Hardware, with Germany in close competition, but Britain still holds pride of place in the manufacture of Cutlery, and there is no doubt that it will be a hard matter for the foreign merchant to compete successfully against her in this line; still the Germans have got the thin end of the wedge in, and as they are sending travellers to all parts of the Colonies, and taking fair orders for a lower class of goods, which are got up very attractively and are very good value, there is every reason to suppose that they will do better in higher qualities as their knowledge of the trade increases. Their percentage of the trade is about one-tenth of the whole.

32. IMPLEMENTS &
TOOLS OF INDUS-
TRY. These goods were at one time exclusively imported from English houses, but America and Germany entering into competition, and not being as conservative as the British Merchant, whilst also supplying an equally good article at a lower rate, their trade has increased until their imports are a trifle over two-thirds of the total. One great element of the success of American and German manufactures is (and this applies to all classes of tools and hardware) that they will take the trouble to ascertain the special requirements of any particular trade, and make a special article to suit that trade; whereas the British manufacturer shows his range of patterns, and if there is nothing suitable amongst them he will decline to do business rather than alter or make new shapes even if the order is a large one, and so naturally the trade drifts to the man who will make what you want, and the average merchant has not patriotism enough to pay three and sixpence for a tool of British manufacture if he can get a similar tool of foreign manufacture for three shillings.

34. LEATHER. A. Foreign imports very small.

A. Unwrought.

B. Boots & shoes.

B. The trade in light goods is principally confined to Germany and Austria, these countries turning out a much better fitting article, lighter in appearance and superior finish, at a much less cost, with a greater attention to detail, than the British manufactured article. Within the last eighteen months America has entered the ranks of competitors, with an entirely different class of goods in both men's and women's footwear, and importers generally have increased their orders, and predict a good trade with America in the near future. In the heavier class of men's goods the British manufacturer still does the bulk of the business of this Colony; the trade in canvas and rubber shoes is also mostly British at present, but American goods are fast displacing them.

The percentage of Foreign trade as against British is at least seventy-five per cent. of the total imports.

C. Of other sorts.
D. Saddlery and harness.

C. and D. The importation of saddlery, harness, &c., to this Colony is limited, if not entirely confined to Britain and America, this, as in many cases, the lower class of goods coming from America and the better class from Britain.

The percentage of imports is about three-fourths British and one-fourth American. The trade with America is rapidly increasing, orders being largely diverted in that direction, possibly to the extent of fifty per cent. of total.

36. LINEN AND
JUTE MANUFAC-
TURES. No Foreign competition, with the exception of a few imports of d'oyleys and tray-cloths from Germany.

37. MACHINERY. A. The trade in all classes of steam engines, such as locomotives, traction, A. Steam engines. marine, donkey, &c., is exclusively British.

B. Other sorts.

B. Evaporating machines for preparing fruits, &c. are practically limited to America, and England does not enter into competition in these lines. Germany takes the lead in the manufacture of mining machinery, and, as in a great many other branches of industry, she is gradually superseding Great Britain, more especially in ore-saving appliances and concentrating machinery. America does about two-thirds of the business in agricultural machinery in the Colony, the general opinion being that they are constructed very much stronger, lighter, and are more adapted for the purpose, than the machinery of any other country; this also applies to agricultural tools and implements.

39. MEDICINES
AND
DRUGS.

The falling off in the British export trade is due to the fact that the continental houses are addressing themselves more and more directly to the retail than the wholesale. In the matter of fine chemicals, their goods are at least twenty-five per cent. cheaper than the British manufactured article, and for purity they stand the severest tests, while for get-up and general appearance they are far in advance of British. As a further reason, the continental houses were at one time content to manufacture chemicals only, but now they are competing buyers in the London drug sales for original parcels and shipments, and they are satisfied to list them at a much smaller profit than the old-time conservative druggists of the United Kingdom; as a consequence a very large percentage of the trade has been diverted to the Continent.

The American trade is largely due to patent and proprietary medicines, which are not to be obtained outside that country.

40. METALS.—

- A. Iron and old iron for re-manufacture.
- B. Pig and puddled.
- C. Bar, angle, bolt and rod.
- D. Railroad, all sorts.
- E. Wire.
- F. Hoops, sheets, and boiler plates.
- G. Tinned plates.

A to C and F to G. Almost exclusively British importations.

D. Belgium supplies one-tenth of the railway iron, the balance British.

E. Wire.—The importations to this Colony consist almost entirely of goods manufactured in Germany,—America and Britain not being able to compete either in price or quality. Rabbit-proof netting is almost entirely of British manufacture.

41. MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS.

Pianos.—Germany has for years past been largely and steadily increasing her sales in this market; the reason for the increase is that the foreign articles are better finished, neater in appearance, with good tone, much cheaper, and is all round a more saleable article.

Wind and string instruments of all descriptions are made much cheaper and better on the Continent of Europe than in Great Britain, and the importations from foreign sources are at the least eight-tenths of the total imports, and still increasing.

42. OIL & FLOOR-CLOTH.

Exclusively British.

45. PAPER, OTHER THAN HANGINGS.

Almost every country in the world develops special requirements and peculiarities in regard (more or less) to every article consumed. Australia is no exception to this rule, and in the judgment of the trade, to supply what they believe to be needed in their local requirements, have repeatedly tried to get British manufacturers to make (even at an enhanced figure) goods that have in detail of finish varied slightly from the "orthodox" standard British article; but rarely have those efforts been attended with anything like success: either the request has not been considered at all, or else with so little care in the execution of manufacture, that the object has been over and over again defeated. With foreign houses this laxity is entirely absent, and it has often been a matter of wonder that such deviations (though on small lots) from regular makes could be made and still leave the manufacturers a profit (even after similar orders had been treated with contempt in London). The failing that has lost Great Britain much trade is doubtless the adamant rules of old custom being inflexibly enforced, and it is obvious that, unless a very early and determined effort is made by British manufacturers, the next decade will witness far worse losses than they now even fear. For special postal reasons India developed a need for a light-weight double foolscap, and because the demand was large Great Britain consented to supply, but had the quantity been trifling it is almost certain Germany would have had the trade to herself. As with countries so it is with provinces, who may need one class of stuff in one direction, but in another some other product may be required in small quantities, and so far these trifles have been nursed in foreign countries. To carry this argument to its logical conclusion one has only to remember that not alone the country, the province, or the town may require special attention at the hands of the British manufacturer, but even one particular buyer or one individual, and (may be) whimsical consumer, who is prepared to order and to pay for special attention. It is quite impossible to say which "departure" from the "standard" may survive and supervene, but it is apparent that the "manufacturer," who has so far left the beaten track to please and conciliate his customers in small things, will almost inevitably control a large development, should such arise. It is a desire to meet the multifarious requirements of buyers that will "hold trade," and if British manufacturers would hold what they have of connection, they must give good evidence by nursing carefully the "infant changing" trade that is eventually to become supreme.

The continental trade in this article must have trebled during the last decade.

54. SILK MANUFACTURES.
A. Broad-piece goods.

A. Silk piece goods, ribbons, &c., are chiefly goods of French manufacture, though a few of the plain cheaps are obtained from China and Japan.

B. Other kinds.

B. The bulk of the ties and scarves are manufactured in England from imported materials, whilst fully two-thirds of the silk handkerchief trade is done with China and Japan.

58. STATIONERY
OTHER THAN
PAPER.

British manufacturers have a decided lead in this line, and supply our market entirely, with the exception of a few insignificant articles, such as playing-cards, games, &c. In playing-cards British goods are giving place to Belgian and American makes, both of which are cheaper and better than the British.

67. WOOLEN AND
WORSTED MANU-
FACTURES.

Woollen tissues.
Heavy broad, all wool
" " mixed
" narrow, all wool
" " mixed
Light broad, all wool
" " mixed.
A. Worsted Coatings,
E. Broad, all wool.
" mixed.
Worsted coatings.
Narrow, all wool.
" mixed.
G. Flannels.
D. Blankets.
E. Worsted stuffs.
" all wool.
" mixed.
F. Carpets & Druggets.
G. All other sorts.

It is impossible to give a digest of these lines under separate headings, but the opinion of the leading woollen buyers is that in sections A and B the finer class of coatings and light summer worsteds are to be bought in Germany and France to greater advantage than they can be got in Britain, in that the designs are more artistic and neater, the quality and texture much finer, and the wear quite equal to the British article; but in the rough tweeds such as the West of England, Yorkshires, Bannockburns, &c. the English market is the only place where you can get bedrock value.

C. Almost exclusively British.

D. Ditto

E. Included in Sections A and B.

F. There is no foreign competition either in carpets or

G. Druggets, the imports being all British.

TOTAL VALUE IMPORTS—

	£	s.	d.
1884	1,656,117	10	0
1889	1,611,035	7	2
1895	1,094,456	12	9

No direct foreign importations, except Timber from the Baltic.

CLASSIFICATION and Return showing Exports of the Manufactures and Products of Tasmania for Twelve Months ending 31st December, 1895.

Classification.	Articles.	Quantity.	Value.	Remarks.
Art and Mechanic Productions.	*Leather	378,949 lbs.	£ 11,156	Shipped regularly to London. This product is largely utilised locally, only the lighter hides being exported.
(Textile Fabrics & Dress.)	Fabrics, cotton, woollen, silk .	386 packages	4633	
Food, Drinks, &c., (Animal Food).	Bacon and Hams	2754 lbs.	69	We do not produce, but could do so, for export to United Kingdom on a preferential duty of 2d. per lb.
	*Butter	304,249 lbs.	12,518	Shipped to London during season, the quality finds it a market in United Kingdom; any duty would be disadvantageous to commerce. and, possibly, hurtful to producer here, as price would reduce consumption..
	Cheese	1290 lbs.	27	
(Vegetable Food).	*Honey	360 lbs.	6	Trial shipment to London. Is one of the small wares our country folk might ship at a preferential duty of 2d. per lb.
	*Fruit—Green	565,160 bush.	130,313	Shipped to London and other places during season. The difficulty is neither free trade nor protection, but how to place grower nearer to consumer. At 2s. per bushel in the orchards, we can supply a million bushels in March, April, May, and June. The satisfactory development of the trade is retarded by the Hebrew fraternity which controls the trade.
	Jam	964,423 lbs.	16,702	
	*Pulp	10,246 pkgs.	12,658	Shipped to London and other places during season.
	Preserved	2664 pkgs.	1791	
	Grain—Barley	21,798 bush.	1932	Grain cannot be produced in Tasmania to compete in United Kingdom against wheat grown elsewhere, unless at prices, in Liverpool, of about 30s. per quarter.
	Oats	341,727½ bush.	25,757	
	Rye	20 bush.	4	
	Wheat	45 bush.	9	
	Turnips	817½ tons	1117	
	Onions	7½ tons	28	
	Peas and Beans	49,036 bush.	5065	
	Potatoes	48,067¾ tons	70,786	The freight is prohibitive, and, unless ripe, carriage in good condition very doubtful.
	Vegetables	119 pkgs.	23	
	Tares	287 bush.	68	

* These items are the articles that are being shipped to London.

Classification.	Article.	Quantity.	Value.	Remarks.
(Drinks, &c.)	*Hops	574,243 lbs.	£ 18,210	Small quantity to London. Supply of Kent for United Kingdom sufficient without ours. Bavarians may partly supply you, and possibly a differential duty in favour of Australia may assist product here.
	Cider	10 gallons	1	
Animal and Vegetable substances. (Animal.)	*Ambergris	4 pkgs.	1100	Shipped to London.
	*Beeswax	2998 lbs.	178	Ditto
	*Bones, Hoofs, & Horns	29 pkgs.	248	Ditto
	*Hair	3584 lbs.	124	Ditto
	*Hides & Skins	215,473 No.	23,661	Shipped regularly to London, chiefly sheep-skins, are already well placed in London.
	*Native Skins	216,130 No.	7365	Shipped regularly to London.
	*Rabbit Skins	3,377,654 No.	15,499	Ditto
	*Tallow	175 tons	2968	Ditto
	*Wool	7,223,219 lbs.	202,341	Ditto
	*Glue	8960 lbs.	50	Ditto
	*Rugs	4 pkgs.	174	Ditto
(Vegetable.)	*Bark	6167 tons	33,753	Ditto
	*Gum	10 gallons	20	
	Hay & Straw	8109½ tons	16,252	The efforts being made to secure part of the United Kingdom demand will succeed eventually, but our timber cannot shut out Baltic and Oregon even with preferential rate of duty.
	Seeds, Plants, & Trees	2944 pkgs.	1911	
	Timber—			
	Blackwood	422,058 sup. ft.	2182	
	Ditto logs	150,518 sup. ft.	439	
	Pine logs	31,695 sup. ft.	62	
	Laths, Shingles	63,300 No.	28	
	Sassafras Logs	21,544 sup. ft.	54	
	Palings	1,127,815 No.	3774	
	Myrtle Logs	7280 sup. ft.	20	
	Posts and Rails	15,183 No.	180	
	*Sawn	6,509,762 sp. ft.	17,960	
	Shaped Pieces	38,222 No.	1466	
	Treenails and Staves	1,245,290 No.	5207	
	Willows	105 pkgs.	1313	
Oils	*Oils, various	66 tuns	5	Shipped to London and other places.
	*Oil, Sperm	241½ tuns	6552	
	*Oil, Eucalyptus	257 pkgs.	3096	
Live Stock	Horses	48 No.	2287	
	Sheep	4113 No.	15,130	
	Poultry	15 No.	66	

* These items are the articles that are being shipped to London. Timber for paving purposes has been shipped to London and Marseilles: the supply of suitable timber in Tasmania being inexhaustible, orders to any extent could be executed.