

frozen, and carried frozen the whole way; but the bulk of the shippers prefer the cool-chamber. They do not all seem to agree on this point. When we carry in the cool-chamber the temperature is kept at 45°, or as near to 45° as possible. Each steamer is fitted up with cool-chambers that can carry about 100 tons of butter. It is fitted up so that, in the event of there being no dairy-produce to carry, we can use them for freezing. The insulation is the same. It is simply a question of regulating the cold air. I may state that the store-butter which the steamers bring out with them from England is always brought out frozen. It always keeps well. I do not know whether if shipped in bulk for the purposes of commerce it would be the same. This butter is made specially for the ships: it is made in the west of England: it is pure fresh butter. I do not know that they have tried experiments to see how long it would keep out of the chamber. It is perfectly good for a week. That is as much as we could expect of butter straight from the dairy.

216. You say that the cool-chamber is preferred?—Occasionally we have shippers who prefer it frozen.

217. From your knowledge, would you say the butter is not damaged by being frozen?—Not as far as I know. I do not know whether it will keep any length of time afterwards. I know that the ships' store-butter keeps a week. It is perfectly fresh butter; it is not corned in any way.

218. Can you tell the Committee what arrangements exist in this port, or through New Zealand, for storage of butter?—We have no special arrangements here. I do not know that they have in any of the other ports. The Harbour Board sheds are cool-sheds, but I could not call them cool enough for the storage of butter. The temperature in them is, however, very even. There is one place under the assurance office building which was formerly used by the Government for the telegraph station. That is a cool place. The general store for butter is there. It is estimated to hold about a thousand casks. The Harbour Board of Wellington is about to build shortly: the plans are being drawn for its new offices at the foot of Jervois Quay. There will very likely be a cellar under there available for storage of butter. I do not know that it will be very large.

219. Do you consider that, in the interest of the port, cool-accommodation should be provided for storage of butter?—I think it would be better if they could bring it in straight to the ship. We usually wire to the people at Taranaki and other places telling them when the steamer will be ready to receive it.

220. That saves the cost of storage?—Yes.

221. Is it possible that within a reasonable time you will be able to place vessels on the berth at the Railway Wharf for England, carrying dairy and other produce?—They are dredging now at the right side of the wharf, so that there may soon be enough water for the cargo-boats.

222. For the mail-boats?—No, for the cargo steamers only.

223. Do you also provide accommodation for shipping butter and other produce in the cargo-boats?—Yes, for butter specially. They are also meat-carriers.

224. Do you consider that the sheds on the wharf are not fit places for the storage of butter?—They are not as cool as they should be for such a purpose. They are ordinary cargo-sheds, and not insulated in any way. But there is always a thorough draught there. The temperature in them has been frequently taken, and found to be very even.

225. Do you find that, in the carriage of butter in the refrigerating-chambers, there is any damage done to the casks by the expansion of the frozen moisture in the butter?—No, we have not noticed that.

226. Because we have been told that when the casks come out of the freezing chamber the hoops fall off?—I think that arises from bad cooperage. It is frequently the case before we get the casks on board that the shippers have not taken the necessary precautions to fix the hoops, and, in consequence, some fall off whenever the packages are handled.

227. Then you consider that more care should be exercised by the shipper?—Yes; but there has been a great improvement within the last twelve months. They have taken to using galvanised iron instead of the old iron hoops. This improves the appearance of the shipment and has some other advantages. Some shippers now cover the casks with scrim, so as to keep them clean; this scrim is taken off at the end of the journey.

228. *Mr. Walker.*] You have stated that you buy butter in England for the voyage out?—Yes, we frequently have a quantity left after the voyage.

229. Would it not pay you to buy the butter here for the two passages?—No, it is a question of its keeping. We would have to put it into a freezing-chamber at Home if we took it from here. Then, the ships' passengers, as a rule, prefer the English butter to the New Zealand butter.

230. By the term English, do you mean Danish or Normandy, or strictly English butter?—It is made in the west of England.

231. *The Chairman.*] Do you provide yourself with butter direct from the English dairy?—Yes, a special quantity is made for us, and we have it fresh from the dairy; it is made in 11b. pats, covered with a linen rag or cloth, and put into boxes holding about 30lb.

232. *Mr. Walker.*] Do you say you cannot get butter like that here?—I do not think so; the best I have ever seen in New Zealand does not come up to the butter we have in the steamers. I might state that two years ago a representative from Taranaki came here to see the whole process of the treatment of butter in the steamers, and that there was no fault on the part of the ship. I showed him the butter taken out of the refrigerator. He said we could make nothing equal to that here. I do not know the gentleman's name.

233. Your Board does not propose at present to do anything more than provide cellar accommodation?—Not at the present time.

234. *Mr. McKerrow*, in giving evidence before the Committee, pointed out the ease with which you could make a cool-chamber by partitioning off a portion of one of the sheds?—I do not think that would be found to answer. There should be a passage between the two buildings. The insulation would scarcely be quite perfect. That is an iron shed, and would not be likely to make a cool place unless it was properly insulated. The Harbour Board have not considered it. I may