

308. *Mr. Walker.*] Do you know of any book that would give the Committee positive information on this subject?—My information is gleaned from agricultural papers. I do not know any work that I could lay my hands on at this moment treating on dairying in Sweden.

309. We have the Royal Agricultural Society's reports.—Yes; for the last two or three years they contain a great deal of information.

310. And the Highland Society?—Yes.

311. *The Chairman.*] With the object in view of preventing bad butter being exported, would it be advisable for the Government to step in?—Do you think that Government would get an Act passed to that effect? I do not see how it could be done without an Act.

312. To make it compulsory an Act would have to be passed?—They would be bound not to ship butter under a certain grade. But it is so difficult to get co-operation with people scattered in different parts of the country. In Victoria everything centres about Melbourne; every organization there is workable from one point. But it is not so here. Here we have North Island and South Island, and everything lying in different directions.

313. Do you think that buyers would respect that classification?—I know there is a strong organization at Home against everything new which interferes with old-established customs. I do not know whether they would, and even if they did, whether you would not still have to establish dépôts for the sale of it. You know the difficulty that has taken place with regard to frozen mutton. The same thing would happen in regard to everything new that interfered with the brokers.

314. Do you know of any difficulty regarding the shipping of butter?—The directors of the Tai Tapu Factory arrange with the carriers to come at night and take the butter straight to the vessel. I understand that the Lyttelton Harbour Board are making arrangements for a cool-chamber for perishable goods.

315. When you were in Victoria last did you visit Mildura?—No, I did not.

316. *Mr. Mackenzie.*] Do you think that irrigated settlements would increase the output of butter?—I do not know whether they would produce good butter; whether the grasses they would produce would be in every respect the most suitable. They might produce large quantities of milk but not a proportionate quantity of cream. Referring to freezing butter, I had a letter some time back from an agent in London referring to the frozen chamber. He said it ruined the butter to freeze it, and strongly condemned the practice. He said it rendered the very best butter inferior.

MONDAY, 18TH AUGUST, 1890.

Mr. WILLIAM WHITE examined.

317. *The Chairman.*] You are Chairman of the Lyttelton Harbour Board?—Yes.

318. We are anxious to have any information you can give us on the subject of providing cool-storage accommodation for butter at the Lyttelton Harbour?—I do not think we have much information to give on that subject. We are only just now considering the matter.

319. Your intention is to provide such accommodation?—I cannot say that. What has been done up to the present is this: Mr. Wright has given notice of motion for consideration at the next meeting of the Board as to whether it is not advisable to provide a cool-chamber for storage, and I think also to provide for freezing purposes. Certainly a cool-chamber for storing produce generally is required.

320. Can you tell us what has been the custom up to the present time as regards butter? Do the exporters make use of your sheds at all?—Not to any large extent.

321. Then, the butter comes down from the country and is sent on board at once?—Yes, or it is sent to the freezing-works.

322. You mean the Belfast Freezing Works?—The Belfast Freezing Works and the Islington Freezing Works. The latter is a new establishment started within the last year.

323. At the present time there is no cool-storage available at the port itself?—None that I am aware of.

324. Then, considerable expense would be caused by the additional freight—handling the produce in sending it to the Belfast Freezing Works and then to the steamers?—Certainly.

325. Is the proposal to establish the cool-storage contiguous to the steamers' wharf?—Well, that might perhaps depend upon the action of the Commissioners. You are aware they are trying to obtain possession, or, rather, they have possession, and are trying to take what we call No. 5 shed under the Public Works Act; so the storage-accommodation might be provided close to it, or a portion of No. 5 shed taken for the purpose; or it may have to go near what we call the Board's reclamation-ground, round by the docks, or near the present stores.

326. But, at all events, it would be within communication by rail?—Oh, certainly. It would either be handled direct from the store to the ship, or the most that would be charged would be 1s. 6d. per ton for haulage.

327. The charges would not exceed 1s. 6d. per ton?—That is the present rate of haulage from the stores to the ships' side; that includes handling.

328. And what would be the cost of storage?—We have not considered that point. The cost of storage would depend on the cost of the necessary plant and other outlay. We have not considered the cost of storage; in fact, I may say the Board has not gone thoroughly into the matter.

329. We understand that the Board generally recognises that cool-storage accommodation is desirable?—It has never been before the Board. The discussion has taken place between private members of the Board, more particularly between Mr. Wright and myself. Personally, I am in favour of a cool-chamber, and also of a refrigerating-machine, so as to freeze the sheep or cattle as they come to port, and keep them in a proper state until the boat is ready to take them in. It would do away with the difficulty as to trucks, all the cargo being ready for the steamers as they arrived. The whole thing, I think, will hinge upon the support given to the Harbour Board. If we