

can see any reasonable chance of our storage being utilised there will be no doubt but that the Harbour Board will get the necessary plant for storing. That is my own opinion only, and not the opinion of the Board.

330. Has there been much butter shipped from Lyttelton?—I could not say. Mr. Williams probably could answer that question better than I. The Harbour Board Treasurer's statements are very full statements, and will afford all the necessary information.

331. Will you provide the Committee with a copy of the Harbour Board returns?—You shall have a copy of them; they will give all the particulars; they are very full returns.

Mr. C. HOOD WILLIAMS examined.

332. *The Chairman.*] You are Secretary to the Lyttelton Harbour Board?—Yes, I am Secretary and Treasurer.

333. You have heard what Mr. White has stated?—Yes.

334. You agree with his statement?—Yes; he has stated exactly the case as it stands. The matter has not come before the Board. I have been instructed, in the resolution referred to, to get certain particulars as to the quantity we should have to store in Lyttelton; but, having been absent from Christchurch during the last fortnight, since the Harbour Board last met, I have been unable to get it. I saw Mr. Waymouth, the Secretary to the Belfast Freezing Company, and he informed me that he considered a building of 80ft. by 60ft. would, in his opinion, meet the requirements as a cool-chamber for cheese, butter, or anything else that might require cool-storage. He also stated that the works of the Belfast Company and the other freezing company at Islington, being at so great a distance from Christchurch, were very inconvenient for the purposes of a cool-chamber for storing cheese and butter.

335. This 80ft. building would, not of course, mean a large storage-building?—No; that would be for a mere cool-chamber for cheese and butter, and possibly fruit and game only.

336. It is simply for cool-storage and not for refrigeration?—Yes. The resolution that Mr. Wright proposes is for a cool-chamber and not for freezing. The larger question, of course, the Board might take up in connection with its cool-chamber.

337. Can you give us any information as to how butter arrives for export?—Well, as a rule, it arrives in trucks, and is stored in the Harbour Board stores and in private stores in Lyttelton. Most of the sheds are built entirely of iron, and are very hot in summer.

338. Then, you think that the butter is very possibly damaged by that?—Not from my own knowledge. I think Mr. Waymouth told me that considerable damage is done both to cheese and butter through its being stored in these heated iron stores. The produce comes down from the country, and very likely the vessel is not ready to take cargo of this class; consequently it is shunted into these iron stores, where it remains sometimes for several days.

339. Are all these stores you speak of as being used for butter-storing in connection with the railway system?—They are all served by railway-lines.

340. There is no additional cartage?—Oh, no; they are all served by the railway. The Board has several suitable sites; it is only a question of the Railway Commissioners giving the necessary access to them. There is a site near the ocean-steamer wharf—a very suitable one, which could be served by the railway, and would be close to the vessel that takes the produce.

341. *Mr. Walker.*] There is no storage-shed in Lyttelton Harbour served otherwise than by railway?—No. The private stores are owned by the New Zealand Loan and Mercantile Company, Shaw-Savill and Co., and the New Zealand Shipping Company. In addition to these, the Board have stores of their own. They have one brick store, which is rather a better store than the others, but it is always occupied with grain.

342. *The Chairman.*] None of these have power to cool the air?—No; there is no provision for that purpose.

343. *Mr. Walker.*] Does the butter lie for any length of time in the port?—Sometimes it lies for several days.

344. We are informed that in Wellington the shippers prefer to get their butter in direct from the country, and have it put on board the vessel with as short a delay as possible. Is a practice like that in existence in Lyttelton?—I think not. I got my information from Mr. Waymouth. I understood from him that they had no conveniences for storing butter before it came forward for shipment.

345. As a rule, it runs the risk of having to lie at the port some time?—Yes. They prefer that the cooling of it should be done in port, and that a cool-chamber should be provided in Lyttelton.

346. We had evidence from the Wellington Harbour Board that it had some doubt as to whether the Harbours Act gave the necessary powers to Harbour Boards to construct such works as you indicate: has your Board any doubts on that subject?—None whatever. The Board took legal advice upon it, and the clauses of the Harbours Act are very clear. I heard that Mr. Ferguson, in giving his evidence before this Committee, had stated the reverse, and I think he did not make himself quite understood on that point. I think he agrees with me.

347. *The Chairman.*] Do the Railway Commissioners provide a proper system of trucks to bring in the butter?—Yes; they have a large number of cool-chamber trucks which they use for meat, and I presume they would put butter and cheese in them. Possibly they may have to increase the number if any large export is made of cheese and butter.

348. Has there been any difficulty in Port Lyttelton in getting accommodation in the steamers to take away the produce?—I have not heard of any.

349. *Mr. Walker.*] Are you sure that the Railway Commissioners place their cool-cars at the disposal of butter-producers?—I am not aware that they do.

350. You have not heard complaints on the subject?—I have heard complaints of the meat-freezing companies not being able to get sufficient meat-trucks.