

direct to London. They get advances from the New Zealand Loan and Mercantile Company on the shipments.

371. You have no particular requirements at the wharf for storage. Would a cool-chamber or shed be requisite?—No, it would not in our case, because the farmers all know when the steamers sail for any of the ports. They bring the cheese down during the day, and it is shipped the following evening for Dunedin and Lyttelton. I noticed that you asked Mr. Williams if there was any scarcity of freight in cool-chambers. I know for a fact that large shipments have been delayed for months because freights are not available in cool-chambers at Lyttelton. The Harbour Board of Lyttelton acts for the northern side of the Peninsula. The Borough Council acts as the Harbour Board under the Act. All the northern part of the County of Akaroa is bounded by the Harbour of Lyttelton, and Pigeon Bay is also under the control of the Harbour Board.

372. You do not agree with Mr. Ferguson as to wharf-accommodation?—We do not want any storage as a rule in Lyttelton, because it is perfectly well known when the direct steamers are to sail, and we have almost daily steamer communication between Akaroa and Lyttelton. The produce is put into cool-chambers of the ships alongside the wharf at once if there is space. We have to apply a month beforehand to get space. Settlers have to sell their produce at a loss through not being able to ship it in the cool-chambers of the vessels. There is another matter which seems somewhat curious: sometimes those considered the worst cheese-makers get the best returns. It is an extraordinary fact that the men who make a first-class article and take all the care they can will get 10s. a hundredweight less price for their cheese. Proper grading would be a guarantee that the man who made a good article would get a good price. There is evidently a great deal of "fluking" in the matter.

373. *The Chairman.*] Might not that be caused by the long storage in the shed at Lyttelton?—I cannot tell the reason, but it frequently occurs that the returns of the best makers are the lowest.

374. Can you state to the Committee whether the different quality of produce sent by the same steamer is sold at the same market?—I cannot say; but there is not such variation in the London market as would account for the difference in price.

375. *Mr. Walker.*] You stated that the industry is decidedly on the wane?—Yes, it is on the wane.

376. And that the settlers are taking to sheep?—Yes.

377. Is it not because the cocksfoot industry gives them a better return than the dairying industry?—It arises from the present price of mutton and wool. The price of cheese is low, and the rearing of sheep requires less labour. The people do not like the Sunday work making cheese. They see that their neighbours who rear sheep live an easier life—a lazy habit—they go in for the less troublesome article. The cocksfoot industry has fallen off; the price is low. People who keep sheep never harvest the cocksfoot. Those who have cattle keep them in the paddocks half the year and turn them out on the cocksfoot the other half of the year.

378. It is a very important industry is it not?—There are very large tracts of land taken up by sheep-farmers. Men with four hundred- or five hundred-acre farms go in for sheep now who would not have thought of it some time ago.

379. *Mr. Mackenzie.*] You think it would be an advantage to have an expert to go round to the different settlers?—That is very much what is wanted—an expert to go from door to door; to go to each farm for a few days, when he could see the whole operation of cheese-making from beginning to end. It would be of no use going for a few hours.

380. You state that from 50lb. to 56lb. is the best size of cheese for the London market?—Yes, the people think about 56lb. the best size.

381. I was told in London that the best size was from 70lb. to 80lb.?—That would be an inconvenient size. A large amount of the work at Akaroa is done by women, and they would not be able to handle cheeses of that size.

382. Do you know what price is obtained for the best cheese in London?—I know one sample fetched as much as £3 10s. a hundredweight.

383. You mentioned the difference in price obtained for what might seem second-class cheese as against what was considered first class?—That is what has actually happened.

384. Do you not think it may be that what might be considered second-class cheese here, and not looked upon so favourably, would be looked upon more favourably in London?—It may be; there is a great deal in the question of taste, no doubt.

385. Would it not be well to follow up the make of cheese that brings the best price, although not thought so much of here?—The Frenchman to whom I referred as receiving a higher price makes his cheese in a hap-hazard way. He got a high price for one shipment. The next shipment he made and sent Home in the same way he did not get £1 8s. for it. It turned out differently from what I may call the "fluking" shipment.

TUESDAY, 19TH AUGUST, 1890.

Mr. WILLIAM HUME, Produce-dealer, of Wellington, examined.

386. *The Chairman.*] You are a merchant, Mr. Hume, residing in Wellington?—Yes.

387. You have had experience for many years in dealings with dairy-produce?—Yes.

388. Will you make a statement to the Committee as to your views with regard to the production and export of butter?—My opinion as to butter, in the first place, is that it should be properly made, with the water and milk and everything taken out of it; also that the casks should be properly filled at the top, just to give room for the lid to catch in the chine of the cask. Great care is necessary in coopering butter for transit to keep the air from getting into the cask. The cask should also be well jointed, and made out of properly-seasoned wood. A great many casks