

they would have twenty-three steamers in the year leaving New Zealand; and I understand the New Zealand Shipping Company have bought two or three additional steamers. The want of sufficient space has been, as far as I can ascertain, the cause of serious loss to the colony for some length of time. I have been in the provision trade about seventeen years, and in various responsible positions, and my father was in the Irish butter trade for more than thirty years. I have been a buyer of butter for several years. In 1875 very little was known about Danish butter. I remember distinctly that we used to look upon it as an inferior class of butter—that it ranked much below German or Hamburg butter. But the Government of Denmark took a great interest in this dairying industry, and fostered the trade in every possible way. As a result, the trade has developed to enormous proportions; and I think I am right in telling you that last year somewhere about £14,000,000 sterling was sent from the United Kingdom to Denmark for butter. I can make a reference to check my statement, but I am under the impression it was fourteen million. The whole of the provision trade of Manchester, which supplies a radius of, say, thirty miles, imports on an average from Denmark about four thousand casks of butter per week. The casks will average 100lb. to 110lb. net. One reason why the Danish butter has got such a strong hold on English sentiment is owing to the regularity, the perfect regularity, of the various dairies. I will give you one instance, which will go to prove my statement. I think for three years at least we used to wire an order over to a firm in Denmark every Tuesday to send so many casks of butter, relying on them sending the quantity required, and charging the lowest current price. I believe during that time we only had one complaint to make in regard to being overcharged. The shippers fixed the prices themselves. They used to send us the produce of certain dairies. Each farmer usually brands his casks with his initials. I know of one estate where they had 280 cows. This particular farmer made from six to seven casks of butter a week all the year round. Our firm used to sell this butter rapidly without opening the cask at all, the character of the stuff having become so well known that the brand alone sold the butter; and, indeed, at times there was a scramble as to who would get this particular butter. The Danes seem to pride themselves in keeping the reputation of their brands of butter up to a high standard, and their honesty of character in all business details, as well as their general rectitude, is admitted by all who have any trading with them. This is a strong point, which I wish to impress on the Committee: that the Danes are perhaps the most upright people in business transactions in the world. Their casks weighed from 14lb. to 16lb.; and it is the rarest thing possible to have a claim for error in the tares. They always appeared to have allowed actually more than the cask weighed. They have now got the bulk of the butter trade in England. I do not for a moment think that the Danes can produce any more. They seem to have got to the very extent of their productive powers. I am told that they have two cows for every acre of land they possess. The Government of Sweden have also taken much interest in the dairying industry there; and they have appointed agents in various parts of England to report to the Government as to the progress the sale of Swedish butter is making in England. An agent is instructed to point out any defects in the quality of the butter, and as to salting and other points, to suit the requirements of the various markets at home. There is one agent stationed in Manchester, and he is very assiduous in pushing his countrymen's butter in every direction. As far as my memory serves me, in Denmark there is what is called a Minister of Agriculture, who has deputies, who are constantly visiting the centres of dairying, and giving advice gratis to farmers and others. They have very strict laws in regard to adulterating butter in any way. Every man is proud of his own brand, and does his best to keep it up. One dairy we imported for some three years, and the shipper of that dairy was written to several times by people in Manchester, offering higher prices to obtain the shipment.

603. *Mr. Walker.*] The private brand is the only one used?—Yes; each man generally puts his own initials or the name of his estate. If there is no name to his estate he has his initials branded.

604. Do you know anything of the practice of Sweden?—It is precisely the same. The Swedes are getting very solicitous about the reputation of their brands. It is an absolute necessity for the sale of their butter. They have got into the trade, and they mean to keep in. The Swedes have got to about one-half their total productive power—in other words, they can only make double the quantity of butter they are making at the present time. Germany is shipping very much less now than she used to do, owing to the increased demand experienced from the continental cities. The French trade appears to me to be in considerably less compass than it was ten years ago. What I mean to convey is this: The trade in French butter in England is very much less now than it was ten years ago. The fact that they require a larger quantity at home seems to influence that trade very much; and the taste in the north of England particularly is gone for French butter. The Danes have put them out in the large cities in the North. I remember seeing as many as, probably, ten lorry-loads of French butter outside a particular warehouse in Manchester; and now the same firm, I do not think, sell 5 tons a week altogether, the Danish and Swedish butter being taken in preference.

605. *The Chairman.*] What do you mean by a lorry-load?—There would be about 4 tons on each lorry. There would be 60 tons on the fifteen lorries. You may take it generally that the demand for butter is increasing at a rapid rate in the United Kingdom, and that the European supply will, in the course of a few years, be insufficient.

606. *Mr. Walker.*] Can you say anything about the Irish butter trade?—Yes, I can. Irish butter generally has lost its hold on the English market since Danish and Swedish butter have come so strongly to the front. Various efforts have been made by philanthropic individuals in Ireland to foster the butter trade, by establishing dairy-factories on the Danish principle. Numbers of men have subscribed capital, but I am not aware of a case yet where there has not been a loss attached to the undertaking. I have one particular friend—a neighbour, a well-known man in the trade in England—who was the means of having several factories erected. Danish and Swedish workpeople were brought over, and everything that money and skill could do was done to make