

were really not good enough to carry cheese from Akaroa to Lyttelton. The cheese packed by Mr. Hislop was in good cases, well packed, and in good order. I examined the cheeses again at the Cape, and they were still in the same order. The next examination was a few days out of Rio, in the middle of the hot weather. By this time the appearance and condition of the cheese had very much changed for the worse. In some of the cases two or three of the cheeses had swollen with the heat until they had sprung the nails of the cases, and were running, while others in the same case had shrunk at the ends and sides till they were slack in the cases. This I suppose to have been caused by the heat acting on the two different qualities of the cheese. The next examination was in the hot weather, and the cheese was then getting much worse, the butter running off some of the cases, staining everything round them. The next examination was in the Channel, and the appearance had not improved. They were really still going back. No blame could be attributed to the ship, for all the ventilators were put up in the cool weather, and the hatches were very often off for getting out ship's stores. It is a great mistake to ship cheese or butter to London as general cargo in a steamer. The heat is so great it causes a steam from wool, potatoes, and grain, which must be very bad for cheese. The next examination of these cheeses was in London. On entering the sale-rooms, the first thing that strikes a person is the beautiful cheese and butter you see from America and Europe, in splendid condition, while of the New Zealand produce the butter is more like cart-grease, and the cheese like Welsh rabbit, mostly out of shape. Comparing New Zealand cheese sent as general cargo and cheese sent in a cool-chamber is like comparing a new axe to an old rusty axe that has been lying in salt water for months. The cool-chamber, in my opinion, is the only safe way to carry cheese and butter. The New Zealand butter has a very bad name indeed in London. Unless the farmers and shippers pay more attention to packing, quality, and mode of transit the trade will soon be ruined completely. If our produce is landed in good order it will always command a fair price, but at present it is very much neglected. If the same care had only been taken with the cheese and butter in selecting quality and mode of transit as the Belfast Meat Company has done in the selection of quality shipped, our cheese and butter might have been holding a first place in the market. Unless our farmers take more care in cheese- and butter-making, with a better mode of transit than shipping as general cargo, the produce would be better kept in New Zealand.

"A few lines on our frozen meat. There are a great many complaints against our last few shipments of New Zealand lambs—small, poor, and not good quality. This is owing to our dry summer and want of more careful selection, and unless more care is taken next season our lamb trade will suffer. There is another very serious complaint which is causing a good deal of dissatisfaction, and, if not checked, will affect our Canterbury meat. There are a great many ewes that have had lambs being shipped as maidens. Many of these ewes are too fat, and butchers and agents both complain of the last six months' shipments. I think it will be a very dangerous thing for either of our companies to ship old ewes, even if they are marked as such. A great many people in New Zealand are in favour of shipping old ewes. I feel sure it will be a great mistake, and tend to damage our trade. They will be bought cheap, and retailed as the best New Zealand mutton by the retail butcher.

"I brought Home with me, as an experiment and to show some of my friends, a few of our apples. I had two small cases and one large one. In one case the apples were rolled in paper and packed; in another the apples were just put into the case without any packing. The large case was packed with cocksfoot chaff. The case was carried among the passengers' luggage. The apples were all late winter sorts, and pulled from the trees in the first week of May. They were exactly two months in the cases, and when opened here there was not a single apple rotten or bad. They really looked splendid. The large case, which was packed in the grass-seed chaff, was in the best condition. The apples looked as if they would keep for another two months. Apples arriving in London in the months of May, June, July, and August command a high price before the new ones are ready. These months would just suit our New Zealand fruit; and, with care in selecting and packing, a good market could be found here for all our surplus apples.

"Yours, &c.,

"The Editor."

"JAMES HAY, of Pigeon Bay."

STATEMENT of Mr. JAMES BAXTER CONNETT, of Bell Block, New Plymouth, Dairy-farmer.

I THINK the cause of failure in shipments of butter to the Home markets has been the damage and delay during transit from manufacturer to port of shipment. As a proof of this, I may mention that shippers from Taranaki lately recovered some £400 from the Union Steamship Company as damages for deterioration from New Plymouth to Wellington.

The question of classification is a most important one. I certainly think classification necessary, and that it should be effected at the port of shipment. Experts, by use of a "tryer," can judge almost to a certainty if butter will keep.

As to packages, from my experience, I find that 60lb. kegs made of totara are as good as can be wished; they are decidedly better than boxes, as they can be made air-tight. I have heard Pond's boxes very highly spoken of, but the opinion in England seems to favour the kegs. Packers should fill kegs and bore a small hole in the head, then hoop up tightly, and as soon as the butter exudes through this hole a spile should be driven firmly in. By this means all the air is expelled and the butter has a better chance of keeping. Boxes cannot be treated in this way. Another cause of failure on the London market has been the small proportion of salt used. I think there should be at least 5 per cent. Last year's shipment of butter from Taranaki was undoubtedly of a better class than that of the year before, but the price realised was not so good, simply owing to the fact of less salt having been used. I use good clean totara kegs with galvanised hoops, and I burn my brand well in. I also take care that the packages all look clean and smart. I put cloth on top and bottom, with a little salt.