

I consider we could almost do without an instructor so far as cheese is concerned. Still, a good man, who would demonstrate by practice, and take into consideration the variations in different localities, would always be of value to makers of less experience, as beginners, who we shall always have with us more or less. What is wanted is an instructor who will make an informal visit, look over the cheese in stock, observe the system of making, if anything is wrong stop and work a few days, and see if the difficulty can be traced and a remedy applied; not make a formal call, and try to cram them with a set of hard-and-fast rules that might apply to one factory but would require perhaps a different set for each of the next ten he visited. In conclusion, I would say that an instructor should know where and when he is wanted better than any one can tell him, unless some maker is in trouble and he is requested to call.

I am not in a mood for thinking or writing, and in looking this over I doubt if it interests you much. What there is you are welcome to.

I am, &c.,

G. M. ROBBINS.

The Chairman, Flax and other Industries Committee, House of Representatives.

MR. WESLEY SPRAGGE, secretary to the New Zealand Dairy Association, Auckland, writes, through the secretary of the Auckland Chamber of Commerce, under date 1st August, that the association suffered severe losses last year through lack of space in cool-chambers of steamers to England, and suggests that Government should take steps to secure ample space for butter shippers in all the direct mail-steamers leaving New Zealand from September to end of February, reasonable freight at per ton weight or measurement to be arranged, and temperature of 45° to be guaranteed throughout the voyage Home. They do not recommend any bonus system such as was adopted in Victoria, and have no remarks to make regarding the appointment of Inspectors, being of opinion that all that is required is a sure means of getting produce to the market in proper time and in the same condition as it leaves the producer.

LETTER from Mr. J. A. POND, Colonial Analyst, Auckland.

SIR,—

2nd August, 1890.

In reference your letter of the 26th ultimo, requesting me to forward samples of butter-boxes, and also inviting me to offer any information upon these subjects, I now have the honour to reply stating that the boxes desired have been forwarded, and that any information which I can give upon these subjects I shall have much pleasure in recording.

In dealing with these subjects, I will first take up that of "dairy-produce."

The chief item of value in this department is, to my mind, butter, especially with a view to export. The reasons for this decision are—first, that practically an unlimited amount of this article is capable of absorption in the various markets of the world, the chief of which is that of England, while South America, India, and the Cape would also deserve notice; secondly, the manufacture and export of butter entails no loss to the soil if carried out in a skilful manner, which is a matter of no small moment to the farmers and the colony. Now, the value of butter imported into England exceeds twelve millions sterling annually, while the amount which the colony of New Zealand contributes is so small as to make this point alone worthy of attention.

It is with much diffidence that I enter upon a criticism of the mode of manufacturing butter, and the article so produced, which obtains, unfortunately, in so many parts of our colony. The great evils to which I shall call attention are chiefly the segregation of the producers, want of cleanliness, knowledge, and capital, resulting in an output of a very inferior article, entailing an unnecessary loss to the individual producing, and bringing discredit also upon those who have manufactured a superior article, which has possibly been shipped at the same time and under the same conditions as the former.

Now, in the segregation of our farmers, there are too many who have no alternative to making their butter in the most primitive manner, after which it is kegged and often remains for a long time before an opportunity permits of its being forwarded to market, while the changes of temperature which it undergoes are factors in its decomposition. Again, the want of knowledge, too, often is the cause of carelessness in regard to the keeping of cow-sheds and milking-pans, where the filth is left for long periods of time without removal, and pigs are frequently permitted to enter these sheds. If wet weather supervenes, then the malodours, and even splashing of the cattle in the slushy ground during milking, too often affects the quality of the milk; while in dry weather the same material lifted by the wind has a like baneful effect. I have no desire to make sweeping charges, or to assume that this is the state of affairs in most cases; but that it obtains in too many is the result of my observations in many dairies, both in the country and in regard to those supplying milk to this city.

The production of the butter in a proper condition for export is still further endangered in many instances from the want of proper accommodation for setting where separators are not used. Even under the most favourable circumstances, the butter, during summer, when it is produced in the largest quantities, is churned at too high a temperature, resulting in a condition in which it is impossible to remove the caseine, the subsequent decomposition of which adds another and most frequent cause of rancidity. I may add that in the finest butter I have yet received for analysis curd was present to the extent of .674 per cent., while I have frequently found it to exceed 3.5 per cent. There is yet another factor to be considered in which much injury is done to butter during its production, and that is in the use of impure water for washing. This is a matter which frequently comes before me, and is more often the cause of carelessness or neglect than the actual impossibility of obtaining suitable water.

To all this let me add the irregularity of salting, the variety of the output of the butter when made in a small way, the difficulties of transport, and high temperature to the port of departure,