

Price to Producer

The prices paid to producers in Dunedin for milk are low. They are as follows :

							Per Gallon,
							d.
June, July, and August	..	..	..	..	..	..	12½
September and May	..	..	..	..	..	..	12
October and April	..	..	..	..	..	..	10
November to March (inclusive)	..	..	..	..	..	..	8½
Average	..	..	..	..	..	..	10·3

Surplus milk is paid for at factory butterfat rates, and this appears to be the case even if the milk is used for the production of cream.

In the opinion of the Commission there is a direct causal connection between these prices and the decline in milking for town supply. No doubt the factors of reduction in fertilizer and shortage of labour contribute to the result as they do in other areas. But the price must be regarded as the principal factor in making the position in Dunedin as disastrous as it undoubtedly is. While these prices prevail an increase in total annual supply or an improvement in providing an all-the-year-round supply cannot be expected. Indeed, in the opinion of the Commission, unless an increase is granted immediately, a further decline is inevitable, and that would be a calamity.

COLLECTION

The Dairy Farmers' Co-operative Milk Supply Co., Ltd., organizes the collection of all milk-supplies on behalf of its members, and the milk is transported to Dunedin by truck. The work is done by a contractor. The Dairy Farmers' Co-operative Milk Supply Co., Ltd., and the Transport Department have collaborated and have zoned the collection on the Taieri Plain. Considerable saving has been effected, though a difference of opinion exists among the parties on the question of whether the milk should be railed from Mosgiel or taken right into the city by truck. Further savings cannot be appreciable, but the Dairy Farmers' Co-operative Milk Supply Co., Ltd., may be expected in the interests of its members to keep the matter under continuous review. The practice is to collect the overnight's milk and the morning's milk in the morning and to deliver it straight to the pasteurizing company. Some of this would, therefore, be from fourteen to sixteen hours old before being pasteurized. The three raw-milk vendors draw their supplies from the depot of the Dairy Farmers' Co-operative Milk Supply Co., Ltd., in Dunedin. The milk collected by the Dairy Farmers' Co-operative Milk Supply Co., Ltd., is picked up at the farm-gate or at the farm dairy, according to individual convenience and arrangement. It is transported on open trucks.

The collection of milk for the raw-milk vendors is unregulated and should be capable of considerable improvement and economy. Though much of the milk is collected from dairy-farms close in to the city some is collected by individual vendors from farms scattered along the high lands of the Peninsula. The practice is to collect the whole of the day's milk in the evening and to deliver it the next morning. This means that the morning's milking is twenty-four hours and more old before it is distributed. Probably most of it is collected from the dairy, though there is no evidence of a uniform practice.

The producer-vendors generally have their dairy-farms on the hilly country immediately adjacent to the area of delivery. Whether any considerable economy could be effected by any system of rationalization is a matter for inquiry and is linked in the case of the producer-vendor with the question of zoning of delivery. The milk is, of course, picked up from the producer's own dairy, and the evening's and the morning's milk goes out on delivery in the morning. A portion, therefore, is delivered within a short time of milking, and the balance is milk that has been kept overnight only.

It is not possible to arrive at an average cost of the collection of all this milk brought into Dunedin. An inwards cartage cost of 1d. per gallon is shown, and this is in excess of similar returns from Auckland and Christchurch, where the comparable cost ranges from 0·68d. to 0·85d.

TREATMENT

As in the other areas, so in Dunedin, both raw and pasteurized milk are supplied to the consumer. Of the total milk delivered apparently about 50 per cent. is pasteurized. But of the milk that is retailed the percentage pasteurized is only 31. Of the pasteurized milk 35 per cent. only is bottled; but of the pasteurized milk retailed 69 per cent. is bottled; and of all milk sold, both raw and pasteurized, slightly over 17 per cent. is bottled. Those percentages are set out in the following table :—

					Percentage Total.	Percentage Retail.
Total pasteurized	..	..	..	..	50	31
Pasteurized, bottled	..	..	..	..	35	69
Pasteurized, loose	..	..	..	..	65	31
Total raw	..	..	..	..	50	69
Raw loose	..	..	..	..	100	100

It will be seen that, compared with the position in all other areas, a low percentage of the milk is pasteurized in Dunedin and that the bottling of milk is relatively still lower.

The standard of treatment is low. There is no regular sampling and testing of milk as practised by the Health Department in Wellington and Auckland or even that practised in Christchurch. The buildings are unsuitable, the pasteurizing-plants are old and defective in important respects, the bottle washing and filling facilities and the general standard and method of handling and treatment are not conducive to the production of a quality milk. In each of the three plants the milk is preheated, and in two plants there are no recording thermometers operating, and the unaided judgment of the operator is the sole means of determining whether the milk is kept at a temperature of 145° F. and retained thereat for thirty minutes. At two of the plants after the milk leaves the holder it is pumped over a cooler, and in the third plant the milk is reticulated. One of these coolers is covered by tin metal sheets that are opened at the sides, the other coolers are completely uncovered. From the cooler the milk is, in two instances, run into a can-filler or bottle-filler. In the third instance no bottling is done and all the milk runs into cans. There is a much overworked bottle-washing and bottle-sterilizing plant in one factory; in the one other factory where bottling is done the bottles are washed by hand. In no instance