

British Ministry of Food. Although diminishing in extent, this association still continues, and it is pleasing to know that the experience and expert ability of those officers have been of considerable benefit to the Ministry in the administration of a major and difficult problem. The period of transition through which we are now passing is a particularly important one from the point of view of the future of our dairy industry, and for this reason fairly full extracts from the reports of these officers are considered worthy of record.

Mr. Taylor reports in part as follows :—

During the war period, as a safety measure against loss of stocks, foodstuffs were distributed as rapidly as possible from shipping centres to widely scattered areas, so that Tooley Street, as the emporium of New Zealand butter and cheese, has been practically deserted. The dispersal of the produce direct from ships to warehouses, where it is often stowed ceiling high, and the non-segregation of brands have made it impossible to examine and report on all shipments of cheese arriving. Generally, cheese inspections have been fitted in with the Ministry of Food's Area Officer when he makes his report upon the storage condition of his stocks of cheese. This involves unstacking and uncrating a number of cheeses and examining the crowns and the general exterior condition of the produce. There is, of course, some expense involved in this procedure, but at the present stage this is being borne by the Ministry of Food.

The old routine is still in force with regard to butter examinations, save that the shipments arriving at Hay's Wharf cool stores in London are very much smaller and at less frequent intervals. However, once the food situation gets more normal and supplies are not required with such urgency as at present, it is likely that butter at least will be returning to the more regular cold stores.

From all quarters one is told of the satisfactory condition of our produce, but one must accept this with some reserve, as there is the factor of comparison with a quantity of rather inferior produce.

Southern Hemisphere butters have been the mainstay of the butter ration in this country for the war period, but it is difficult for the general public to know the country of origin. The man in the street is not fully aware of the fact that he owes very much of the quality of his issue to Australia and New Zealand. Some of our butter is, in my judgment, lacking in character—clean, but neutral. Immediate competition for our choicest full-flavoured butters is not likely, but it will come with the unrestricted sales of margarine and Continental butters.

Several shipments of oil-tainted butter have reached this country during the past two years, and the question is causing some concern to shipowners.

The activities of the British Standards Institute, which eased off considerably during the war, have now been revived, and whenever possible I endeavour to attend their meetings, which average one or two a week.

Close contact is kept between this office and the London office of the Marketing Department. Meetings have been attended with Mr. H. E. Davis in relation to the British Food Labelling Order and considerable data collected in regard to vitamin content of dairy-produce, &c.

Meetings of the Society of Dairy Technology have been attended, where various aspects of the dairy industry in this country are discussed.

During the year I made several visits to dairy factories and institutes where Cheshire cheese was being manufactured, in order to forward details of the process to New Zealand.

In addition, in company with scientists, I made visits to Germany and Switzerland to investigate new methods of manufacturing butter by more or less continuous processes. As the result of these visits, some most valuable contacts have been made in Europe, and some old ones renewed. Regarding these new buttermaking processes, it appears that they may be here to stay, and experiments are being carried out in several Continental countries.

The following paragraphs are taken from Mr. Were's report :—

*Creamery Butter.*—Quality on inspection soon after arrival has been found to be sound, and rarely do we find a sample which has depreciated to a lower category than that indicated by grade stamp on package. In describing New Zealand butter as "sound," it is not meant that much of it cannot be improved. The flavour of our butter is often lacking in that character which would cause us to describe it in superlative terms. The flavour of many brands may be described as "rather flat" or "inclined insipid." It is suggested that this lack of character may be due to over-neutralizing the cream from which this butter is made.

*Whey Butter.*—The quality of much of this commodity has been disappointing, and it is felt that more team work between directors, managers, and Dairy Instructors would greatly improve the standard of quality. When whey butter was used solely for manufacturing purposes a high standard of quality was of less importance than now, when Grade 1 is mixed with creamery butter for table use.

*Cheese.*—Average quality may be described as sound. Flavours are sometimes found to be a little irregular, but, on the whole, they are remarkably uniform as compared with cheese flavours from other countries.

Body and texture are good. In my judgment, our cheese was never better than that which has arrived here during the past year, and I believe that the provision trade would endorse this statement.

The prestige of New Zealand dairy products is at present high in Britain; this may not be due as much to the excellence of our produce as to the irregular quality received here from other countries.