

produce more especially of lower and border-line quality, and the officers in sole charge are particularly at a disadvantage in that they have not the benefit of another opinion. In a measure, district conditions and characteristics are also inclined to influence the Graders' judgment, but, generally speaking, good-quality butter and cheese are recognized and pointed accordingly at all ports. As previously mentioned, it is more in the border-line quality of the different classes that variations in the Graders' decisions are noticed, and it is in this direction that more uniformity is desired.

*Quality.*—Feed and land-cress flavours were again pronounced in most of the butter coming forward for grading in the spring months, and in some cases the trouble extended over a longer period than usual, due, no doubt, to the drought conditions experienced during the previous season. The quality of both butter and cheese can be said to have been well maintained, and some ports, particularly Auckland, will show an improvement, due to the better climatic conditions experienced in the Waikato and North Auckland. At New Plymouth, Wellington, and Patea the cheese has been uniformly close with good bodies, and the latter port shows a considerable increase in the quantity of cheese classed Finest during the peak months. My visit to the South Island was rather late in the season, but the cheese seen at Lyttelton and Timaru were somewhat open but pleasing in body. The Southland cheese, although in the main closer in texture, were verging on the tender side as regards body.

Following the spring period the butter examined at Auckland and New Plymouth has mainly been satisfactory and of fairly uniform quality. On the other hand, the Wellington butters, with the exception of a few choice brands, have not, in my opinion, been just as pleasing as at some of the other North Island ports. There is a tendency to harshness in some brands of butter at all the ports, and this, in the spring months, was very pronounced in many of the lines seen at Wellington. The body of the butter generally has been mainly satisfactory, but here again much of the Wellington butter has lacked the desired firmness, being somewhat sticky and greasy in character.

During the season faulty colour in butter has been more in evidence than for some years, and this defect has been more prevalent in the Auckland and Wellington districts. Some brands also were of brittle texture, due, no doubt, to a fault in manufacture.

Whey butter has been (with the exception of the majority of that received at Auckland) of very fair quality. Undoubtedly the best whey butter is manufactured in Taranaki, where a large proportion is made at the cheese-factories. The reverse is the case in the Waikato, and the whey cream in this district is mainly forwarded to a few central butter-factories. This entails long transport and delay, which is not conducive to the manufacture of a good product.

Taking into consideration the labour and other difficulties with which dairy companies have had to contend, I consider that there is a general endeavour to maintain and improve quality on the part of the majority of directors and managers. At the same time, there is a trend in some cases to commercialize the method of manufacture to the extent of being detrimental to the attainment of choice quality. I refer to the managers who persist in incorporating more salt in the butter than desirable, also to the non-segregation of lower-quality cream and the inclination to reduce costs at all hazards, irrespective of the result on the finished product.

*Examination of Stored Butter.*—I examined some twenty-two boxes of creamery butter which had been stored at Wellington for approximately three months. The butter held up very satisfactorily and the regrading points indicated that the original scoring was sound. However, the butter of many brands was decidedly harsh on the palate, which bears out my previous remarks regarding the Wellington butters.

*Finish and Packing of Butter and Cheese.*—The finish and appearance have been mainly satisfactory and generally are watched closely by all Graders.

In the case of cheese, there has been a good improvement where faults in this category were in evidence previously; in consequence, cracked rinds and faulty lips have been less prevalent this season. The cheese have also been clean and only a few odd cases of mouldy rinds have been noted on arrival at the stores. I have been impressed with the absence of mould growth on the cheese examined in the cheese-chambers at a number of the grading-stores.

This improvement is no doubt due to the efforts of Graders in charge and the Instructors, and also because the cool-store authorities are taking more interest, due to the repercussions from the shipping of mouldy cheese.

The butter examined at the various ports has been generally well finished and packed. The mechanical packer makes for a neat and tidy block of butter, and if the parchment is applied in the proper manner the result is usually satisfactory from the point of finish and appearance.

The fibre container for butter, especially the heavier type, appears to be giving satisfaction at this end. The application of the tape is much improved, but there is a tendency in some cases for the overlap to extend down on the impressed brand. This package when well finished presents a neat appearance, more so when the tape and container are the same colour. However, there does appear some room for improvement in connection with the impressed brand and the space available for the necessary markings, including the grade stamp.

The beech timber used in the South Island makes a very solid cheese-crate, also much of the *Pinus insignis* used in the North Island is quite suitable, provided the timber is not immature or denatured. Some of the crates seen in the Auckland stores have not been as satisfactory as those at other ports, and on one occasion I saw whole consignments of crates of cheese with battens fully half