

At present an effort is being made, through the Shipping Inspector of the Marketing Department and the Ministry of Food, to tidy up some of the slack practices which have developed during recent years in the handling and transport of our produce between ship and final destination.

Following are extracts from Mr. Wallace's annual report :—

Butter and Cheese Inspection.—We have endeavoured to see portion of every ship's consignment of New Zealand dairy-produce arriving here. Thus we have forwarded reports dealing with the cargoes of seventy refrigerated ships (including twelve for a second voyage). To accelerate information about quality, for some time we have been air-mailing report sheets dealing with each brand of butter or cheese inspected. This means a saving of time of approximately two months. Inspections were made at the usual ports of discharge—Avonmouth, Cardiff, Glasgow, Liverpool, and London. We also travelled to various other centres for the same purpose, including Gloucester, Hull, Manchester, and Warwick.

Quality of Creamery Butter.—A point worth mention is the uniformity of our product, especially in flavour and make. So marked is this characteristic that on ironing diverse brands it is difficult to discriminate. A trifle more acid flavour in our butter would perhaps be an advantage, though the impression is that greater care has been exercised in the addition of soda to the cream. There were few cases of pronounced soda flavour observed in the butter.

No complaints have been received about the quality, and I believe it has shown improvement. I would emphasize the words of a Bristol merchant : " At all costs keep your quality up. Better let us go without than send a low-grade article."

Fibre Cartons.—The greater proportion of our butter is now arriving in these containers, and under normal transit conditions they are satisfactory. The blending or matching of colour of paper tape with that of the cartons and the proper sealing of the tape would improve the appearance and stability of the boxes. During the year some seventy-one sample cartons and portions of fibre-board, covering all deliveries to New Zealand, were received at this office for testing at the research laboratory at Princes Risborough. It is pleasing to report that the large majority of the samples submitted complied with our present standard of wet bursting-strength. This factor is considered to be of great importance in the carriage of butter at our normal low temperatures, because condensation is often experienced after the discharge of the butter from the overseas vessel.

Laboratory test sheets show that progressive improvement is being effected in the manufacture of fibre-board in strength and moisture resistance. In the case of Swedish fibre boxes a system has been adopted for code marking each shipment to New Zealand. This provides a means for subsequent checking if necessary. It is thought the idea could be extended with advantage to embrace deliveries from all manufacturers.

Cheshire-type Cheese.—There is a diversity of opinion about this make of cheese. Many traders and other interested people take the best English-type Cheshire as their standard and tend to judge the New Zealand product on the basis of its relationship to this standard and not on that of its peculiar merits. It is a matter of speculation whether they ever appear identical, unless both makes are stored for a comparable period and under similar conditions. But with English Cheshire—indeed, all types of cheese—in short supply, the time is ripe to test the market fully.

The London officers devote considerable time to the inspection of dairy-produce from all countries on behalf of the United Kingdom Ministry of Food, apart from the assistance given to the British Ministry. This work provides very useful knowledge for the New Zealand officers on all types and varieties of dairy-produce. The scope of the duties of the Division's London officers also includes a general liaison with the British Standards Institute, British Society of Dairy Technology, International Dairy Federation, and overseas developments in connection with all phases of dairy manufactures and distribution of dairy-produce.

MARKET MILK

Of the thirty-nine milk-treating houses in the Dominion, thirty-seven were granted registration under the regulations during the year, two being refused registration. The standard of acceptance for registration was purposely low, but neither of these two depots was satisfactory by this low standard, and as their term of continuing working was known to be limited it was decided to withhold registration for the present.

Organization.—The pattern of general operation has crystallized during the past year and, in general, has followed a system whereby the local Dairy Instructors paid routine visits to milk-treating houses checking routine working and such items as milk