

Australia is also experimenting with new types and several shipments of blue-veined Gorgonzola and similar cheese are being forwarded. The shipments are small as yet and not always satisfactory, but they are on the lookout for something different and doubtless will persevere.

Experimental Butters.—Consignments of butter manufactured by the Swedish Alfa process unit which was recently installed in New Zealand have arrived in London and have been inspected by your officers and Ministry of Food officials. Some interesting features of this product have shown up which give some cause for speculation as to the future prospects of this method of producing butter.

In the main, I think it would be correct to state that up to date this new process does not show any outstanding feature which would make it attractive to New Zealand. In saying this I do not wish to convey the impression that I consider the Alfa process has no future; on the contrary, I think that in many countries it will be adopted. As I see it, the future of the system will be linked up with the direct packaging of butter into small retail pats, &c., and may possibly be confined to large town dairies which have a retail trade.

The butter presents one or two features which are not common to churn butter. The flavour is somewhat lacking, inclined to be fatty, and in some cases has a scorched taste.

Two of these Alfa machines are now installed in the south of England, and it will be interesting to watch progress and the use to which these machines are finally detailed. We have not been advised of the arrival in this country of any Australian butters made under the Alfa process. It would appear that they are disposing of this butter locally.

Casein.—Two visits have been made to British Plastics factory to examine casein which had been forwarded from New Zealand. The complaint was due to the alleged hardness of the New Zealand produce which resulted in defects in the finished plastics. On our recent visit some comment was made about dirt specks in the New Zealand product; this will have to be safeguarded against, as these minute spots show up in the finished article. Some satisfaction was expressed by the management about the improvement effected in the quality of the casein which has recently arrived in so far as the hardness of the product and its general outturn are concerned. This, I think, is due to the improved technique in New Zealand factory manufacture.

The Future.—The recent Budget has shown that the Ministry is not prepared to continue for very much longer the subsidies on foodstuffs. In consequence, both butter and cheese have been advanced in price to the consuming public. A table recently published in *The Grocer* shows that if the subsidies existing to-day were removed the position would be somewhat as follows:—

Commodity.				Unit.	Complete Removal.	Retail Price Under Subsidy.
					s. d.	s. d.
Butter	..	..	..	lb.	2 7½	1 6
Cheese	..	..	..	lb.	1 10¾	1 2
Margarine	..	..	..	lb.	1 1½	0 10

In the case of butter one wonders what the war years have done to the consuming public in regard to their appreciation of margarine. It is problematic. But how many will pay the high figure for butter when and if we are able to supply the commodity in 1 lb. pats to the customer? The small portion now available has possibly lulled the purchasing public into the fact that on a 2 oz. ration it is only a fractional sum involved and therefore not jibbed at. Will they balk at the larger sum? Without doubt only the choicest of butters will be able to demand this premium over the price of margarine, and it behoves New Zealand to strive to produce only the Finest quality butter, with outstanding qualities which remove it entirely from the blended margarine which will ultimately be in competition with our butter.

In regard to cheese, apart from the dollar situation the outlook appears reasonably secure for a number of years. The world shortage of meat should secure a firm demand for cheese. The present weekly meat ration in Great Britain of 8d. per person is quite inadequate, and cheese would appear to be the only reasonable substitute for manual labourers. A considerable quantity of cheese of varying types has reached this country from the Continent, mostly blue-veined such as Danish Blue, French Camembert, and Gorgonzola. These are meeting with a ready acceptance at present, but I have noted that some of the most enthusiastic supporters of this variety of cheese have indicated that they are unable to maintain their cheese diet entirely upon this veined cheese. In other words, they get sick of it.

A good tasty Cheddar will hold its own with most of them, but it must be good.

Until meat is in reasonable supply, cheese must be in firm demand. As with butter, once the position becomes more normal Cheddar-cheese consumption will largely depend upon its quality and its appeal to the public. If it is lacking in its characteristic flavour, I feel that the public will turn toward the process varieties and the numerous Continental cheese. As a cheese-producer, Canada would seem to be a diminishing supplier to the English market.