

LONDON REPORT BY G. V. WERE

Creamery Butter.—The average quality of our butter, when inspected on discharge, was good. Rarely did we find a brand which had not maintained its grade classification. New Zealand butter is considered by the trade to be the most uniform and reliable butter imported into Britain. This well-merited reputation is the result of many years' effort to achieve perfection. Although we have not reached perfection, our buttermakers have produced a commodity of high quality and uniformity.

A very considerable percentage of our butter is now being distributed in packet form. The packing of butter is a growing practice and has several advantages from the retailer's point of view. The chief merit in packet butter is its uniformity; no one gets more than his share of the outside of the block, which is often less palatable than the butter underneath. This variable degree of surface taint does not appreciably affect the quality of the butter when mixed into a homogeneous mass for quick consumption; the reworking of butter makes it more plastic and spreadable; it can be salted to suit the taste of different districts: and it saves the grocer's time.

Up to the time I left England all butter was being sold as "National," which in effect means that the consumer may be served with the rationed quantity from any country whose butter may be available or a blend of butter from different countries of origin.

Packages.—The fibre-board carton now occupies the premier position as a butter-container from the point of view of quantity. The best solid fibre-board carton makes an excellent package; it provides adequate protection to its contents, it is light in weight, and occupies a minimum of space. Managers of butter-patting plants in England have informed me that they prefer the fibre carton to any other type of package because of ease in handling and fewer breakages than with wood or sarnac boxes.

Cheese.—New Zealand enjoys the reputation of supplying to Britain the most uniform-quality cheese imported from any source. As there is a wide variety of taste in respect to cheese, it is not surprising that our cheese does not suit every-one's palate, but I am of the opinion that a reasonably-clean, mild-flavoured cheese will meet with approval from a larger selection of the community than would cheese more highly flavoured.

Much of our cheese is consumed before it reaches its best condition. This was generally due to shortage of supply, which often necessitated distribution immediately after discharge from ship.

The inspection of New Zealand cheese as a whole is an easy matter, but to examine sufficient vat dates of individual brands to make a report worth while is very difficult under conditions of bulk stowage. I see no prospect of obtaining more cheese reports while this commodity is rationed and is handled in bulk by the Ministry of Food.

Special Cheese (Cheshire Type).—The quality of some of the "Specials" manufactured by the Dalefield Dairy Co. reached a commendable standard of quality. Comparing the best of Dalefield's "Special" with good-quality home-produced Cheshires, which are so popular in the north of England and North Wales, where approximately half the population of Britain reside, is perhaps not quite a true guide to the merits of the respective products.

The comparatively-high fat content of our "Special" cheese tends to produce a body rather too smooth and inclined to be pasty, in comparison with the drier, harsher rub of good-quality Cheshires.

Because we may not be able exactly to imitate a particular type of cheese known as "Cheshire" because of the difference in the composition of milk produced in England and that produced in New Zealand, and our own geographical position, it does not mean that we should abandon hope of securing a fair share of the Cheshire-cheese trade when control and rationing cease.

My experience leads me to believe that New Zealand can produce a cheese which would serve as an excellent substitute for Cheshire during the season from October to March, when the supply of home produce is small.

To any one who has lived in the Cheshire area there can be no doubt about the marked preference of the population for Cheshire cheese.

It may not be generally known to people in New Zealand that all Cheshire cheese does not measure up to a high standard of quality. As a matter of fact, the quality of Cheshire is very variable, and much of it may be described as only mediocre.

LONDON REPORT BY M. H. WALLACE

Routine Inspection Work.—Routine inspection work has been greatly facilitated, as the Ministry of Food office now furnishes us with details of allocations of each ship's cargo to various cool stores throughout the country. We thus have the privilege of being able to choose for our inspection work the most suitable and convenient store listed in the allocation.

The proportion of dairy-produce shipped to main ports for 1948-49 is, approximately: London, 30 per cent.; Bristol, 25 per cent.; Hull and Newcastle, 20 per cent.; Liverpool and Manchester, 15 per cent.; Glasgow, 10 per cent.