

of butter before exportation, but he predicted it would prove a failure. Butter made in New Zealand with more than 12 per cent. of water in it will not stand freezing—it reaches Britain in bad condition and most irregular in quality. He advised the New Zealand factories to keep on sending their best and driest butter, and it will command a high price from the blenders. The best New Zealand unsalted butter, if properly marketed in Scotland, would command a higher price than Danish. At present it is simply sold as “fresh factory butter.” Blending makes colonial butter whiter, which suits the market better; for example, a blend of Victorian and New Zealand butter is whiter than either would be separately. It would be greatly to the advantage of the New Zealand butter-factories if each would regularly consign its output to one dealer, who would then advertise the particular brand and establish its reputation. The “Anchor” brand (Auckland) had been established in this way, and it now commands 2s. per hundredweight more in London than any other New Zealand butter. If his firm could get regular consignments from a good factory, he could make the reputation of the brand and give better returns to the producers. New Zealand cheese is greatly in demand here in May, June, and July, and prices this year are phenomenally high. He would advise New Zealand factories to have duplicate plants, and make either butter or cheese according to the state of the market. His firm does business in tinned meats, and he believes that the Chicago scare will pass away, and these goods will again be in demand; but when that happens colonial tinned meats will have first attention.

Another firm of produce-dealers said that if there were a better and more regular service of steamers the trade could be greatly extended. They were in every way satisfied with the quality, condition, and packing of the New Zealand produce, but would like to be put on a footing of equality with London in the matter of speedy and regular delivery. Some cheese that they had received by the “Oswestry Grange” was two months later than it should have been.

A partner in a large firm of provision-dealers said the importation of New Zealand dairy-produce is largely increasing. How increase it still further? Send the best article, and have more frequent steamers. He denounced the “insane competition” for the purchase of New Zealand butter. Still, he could not affirm that sending on consignment would be better for the New Zealand factories. However, the bad policy of shifting about from one purchaser to another would result in bad times for the producers. They have had good prices; they will have to face a “slump” when it comes. His firm had not lost by the present system, so he was not in any way smarting; but he was satisfied that, taking an average of five years, the dairy factories would find it to their advantage to consign their brand to one firm, who would establish the reputation of the goods and find a steady market for them. His firm had had an unpleasant experience of the west-coast service of steamers. They were getting a certain brand of butter shipped week by week from Australia *via* London, which brand commanded the best prices right through the season, and they had regular buyers for it. That was very satisfactory. But they had other brands of Australian butter coming *via* Cape Horn, and, owing to the length of the voyage and the uncertainty as to the date of arrival, those who shipped by that route lost from 3s. to 5s. per hundredweight. He considered that the west-coast service had upset the market for dairy-produce, for some dealers got direct shipments, and supplies coming at unexpected times overstock the market. His firm would like to get meat from New Zealand, but they found that the large freezing companies have all their own connections in this country, and the small freezing companies will only do business on condition that the consignees establish bank credits for them. The New-Zealanders, he concluded, want too much. This opinion he based upon his experience of several agents in the colony.

A partner in another firm of provision-importers said he was content to get his supplies of New Zealand butter from London, but meat shipped direct to Glasgow is received in better condition than if railed from another port. He condemned the present system of purchasing New Zealand butter. It would be well if the factories would send on open consignment. His firm had been asked to take butter on consignment at a guaranteed price, but that would be worse than buying straight out. They were offered $\frac{1}{2}$ d. margin, buying, say, at 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ d., everything realised over that price going to the producer and they suffering any loss. A few years ago a large business was done on that basis. He is satisfied that New Zealand butter has established its reputation, has been a boon to the British public, and has come to stay. It is a very good substitute for second-class Danish.

In the opinion of a gentleman engaged in the produce trade, the only way to increase the trade in New Zealand butter is to reduce the price. At present it is too close to Danish. New Zealand butter, if sent good and white, will command a good market in Glasgow. Cheese, he thought, would be better if packed in light round boxes, one cheese to each box, instead of in crates.

This opinion was contradicted by the next dealer upon whom I called, who said that crates were best for New Zealand cheese, because they allowed of the necessary ventilation, and he found no inconvenience in having two cheeses in one crate. It would be better if the New Zealand factories made their cheese softer.

VII. LONDON.

Although, strictly speaking, London is outside the scope of inquiries into the west-coast trade, I found it expedient to visit the metropolis, chiefly for the purpose of seeing the heads of some large importing concerns that have interests in the west and north-west of Britain. While in London I made such inquiries as I could; but these make no pretence to being other than casual and fragmentary. I paid no visit to the docks; but, having got an introduction to the chairman of the Thames Navigation Committee of the Corporation of London, and having been informed that there are many defects in the means and methods of handling New Zealand produce at the docks, I inquired of that gentleman whether the Corporation would be disposed to facilitate matters con-