

116. Could you make a shot at an estimate?—I do not know that I should be prepared to do that.

117. Would it improve to the value of $\frac{1}{4}$ d.?—Yes.

118. You previously said you did not think it would improve by £25,000 a year. Would you be surprised to know that this would mean over £25,000?—

119. *Mr. Okey.*] Would £1,250 be sufficient for the average farmer to meet the regulations in the erection of sheds and yards?—I think it would.

120. What do you think would be a fair estimate?—It would be much less than £150.

121. I am taking a concrete shed and making everything favourable?—Yes.

122. You have given the number of suppliers at 6,000. Take those at £150 each, this runs into £1,000,000 of an expenditure for the dairy-farmers of the country. Do you not think that expenditure is rather heavy to get an improvement of £25,000 per annum?—I did not give you those figures.

123. Do you not think we could more easily increase the returns from dairying by culling the herds?—No; you will not increase the value per hundredweight of your produce, but you will increase its quantity.

124. *Hon. Mr. Duncan.*] You are pretty well acquainted with the dairying-conditions in Taranaki: how many of the farms would stand the investigation of a strict instructor working under these regulations? Supposing he went to get convictions, how many do you think would escape?—There are over three thousand suppliers to factories in Taranaki alone. In the district I was connected with I should say there were 10 to 15 per cent. of the suppliers who should be compelled to alter the conditions under which they are working.

125. *Hon. Mr. McNab.*] Mr. Duncan asked if the regulations were strictly enforced how many could escape conviction. Do you, Mr. Harkness, know the regulations we are working under now?—Yes.

126. How many would escape conviction if we prosecuted under these existing regulations?—Just as many convictions should be secured.

WILLIAM FISHER, Farmer, Taratahi, Carterton, examined. (No. 11.)

Mr. Fisher made the following statement: I represent the four factories around about Carterton—Taratahi, Dalefield, Belvedere, and Parkvale. In the first place, we decidedly object to the fees charged for registration, as we look upon that as purely a class tax. You know how much agitation there was to get the sheep-tax taken off, and I think the 10s. for a herd of eleven cows is a much more serious tax than a sheep-tax. On that account we object to the tax. We recognise that there should be some small tax—say, a minimum of 1s. and a maximum of 2s. 6d. The regulations are framed fully as much in the interest of consumers as the settlers, consequently settlers should not be penalised. The great bulk of the clauses seem to me to be made for town suppliers, and not for factory suppliers at all. The great bulk of them would come very hard indeed on the factories. For instance, one clause says you cannot carry pig-wash in the milk-cart. We have to take home whey, and that is pig-wash. If it is literally interpreted that is what it means. There is another clause which prevents the farmer killing a dozen pigs to-day, and taking them to the station to-morrow. This is a common occurrence. And they are taken to the station in the same cart as the milk to the factory. There are several clauses, especially in connection with the floor business, which require amendment. Where we put up new sheds there is not one in the Wairarapa who would not go in for concrete, but a great many have wooden floors, and these are good for years. Under one clause we would have to pull them all up, as has happened during the past few weeks. The Inspector says our good wooden floors are not impervious to water. There is another clause that says that a stable must not be within 30 ft. of a cowshed. There are any number of good buildings in the Wairarapa, good stables and sheds close together. Now, we would have to take the shed 30 ft. away, and the present stable or cowshed would be useless. Every yard must be large enough to hold all the cows got in at one time. No dairyman with any common-sense at all would dream of putting thirty, forty, or a hundred cows in at the one time. Twelve to fifteen are considered quite enough at the one time. "Every cowshed in which more than six cows are to be milked at either the morning or evening milking, and which is not provided with sufficient stalling-accommodation to hold all the cows at one time, shall have either—(i) A large yard, sufficiently large to hold all the cows brought in at any one time for milking, attached thereto, but divided therefrom by a partition or fence, the floor of such yard to be perfectly concreted or paved; or (ii) a yard of such dimensions as aforesaid, situated at least 30 ft. from such cowshed and connected therewith by a race, the floor of which is properly concreted or paved." You can read it in two ways. We realise that you want a large yard and a smaller one to bring in twelve or fifteen at a time. The great bulk of us, situated as we are, would be quite impossible to get 30 ft. away from the shed to put the stock in the race. He reckoned at the factory that 10 ft. instead of 30 ft. would be quite sufficient where they had not a paved or cemented yard. Of course, pure water should be supplied for stock. I am sure that many farmers, if they could get good water, they would be very glad to have it. As to the whitewashing of the cowshed twice a year, or as often as the Inspector orders, we realise, and have always done so, that a good whitewashing in the winter or beginning of milking-season is what every cowshed requires. Whitewashing in the middle of the season would not be very much good, and would not be necessary. Water for washing the floor is all very well if you have a plentiful supply, but how about those who have to get water from a well? We find that where there is not sufficient water to wash the floors a good sweep is the next best thing. Every person must wash his hands before milking every cow. This will be honoured more in the breach than the observance. The Inspector could not enforce it. Another thing we take strong objection to is straining the milk through