

REPORT OF THE INSPECTOR OF NEW ZEALAND DAIRY-PRODUCE, LONDON, SEASON 1911-12.

Terminus Chambers, 6 Holborn Viaduct, London E.C., 10th May, 1912.

SIR,—

GENERAL.

Pursuant with instructions received, I left Wellington on the 1st September, 1911, by the t.s. "Manuka," connecting with the s.s. "Mooltan" at Sydney, arriving at Tilbury Docks on Saturday afternoon, 21st October, 1911, and reporting myself at the High Commissioner's Office on the following Monday morning. On arrival I found that office accommodation had been arranged, and early steps were taken to get the necessary office requisites. There was some delay due to the redecorating of the offices, during which time I shared the office occupied by the Veterinary Officer. However, as soon as the offices were ready I moved into the room allotted to me, being room No. 29, 6 Holborn Viaduct E.C.

The only matter of interest to the Division that came under my notice during the voyage Home was the fact that there is a market in Colombo, Ceylon, for loaf Cheddar cheese, the price offering being about 9½d. per pound wholesale at Colombo. The present supplies appear to come from New South Wales. Packages, twelve cheese in a case of three divisions.

I arrived Home in time to see the first of the season's (1911-12) output arrive in the "Ruapehu." No time has been lost in making myself known to the trade here, and at time of writing I am still increasing my acquaintance with those interested in the handling of New Zealand dairy-produce.

Since my arrival, all steamers arriving from New Zealand and carrying dairy-produce have been attended by me, and the condition of the produce, packages, and methods of discharging noted. Visits have also been paid to the following distributing centres: Leith (1), Glasgow (2), Liverpool (1), Manchester (1), Bristol (4), Cardiff (1), and also the docks at Avonmouth and Glasgow. (The figures in brackets indicate the number of visits paid.) At the various places mentioned merchants were interviewed, dairy-produce inspected, and the local requirements discussed and noted. Samples of butter have been taken for analysis where complaints have been made of excessive moisture-content, and I have also witnessed the check-weighing of our dairy-produce on numerous occasions. Information has also been obtained by me as to the methods of manufacture, marketing, ruling prices, &c., of Caerphilly cheese, and such by-products as casein, milk-sugar, and powdered milk.

Official weekly reports have been sent forward to the Director of Dairy-produce. Copies of these reports have been supplied to the High Commissioner and the Secretary, Department of Agriculture.

CREAMERY BUTTER.

Flavour: Generally speaking, there is not a great deal to be said about the flavour of our various brands of creamery butters, as the majority are of very fair flavour, ranging to choice, giving satisfaction in this respect.

Fishiness: The regrettable erratic prevalence of fishiness in our butters calls for earnest endeavour to get at the root of the evil. This trouble makes its appearance quite unexpectedly in brands that have been giving every satisfaction and have been looked upon as being reliable as to quality, when suddenly "fishiness" appears and causes embarrassment in business circles at this end, and very frequently causes financial loss and certainly dissatisfaction to all parties interested.

Foreign flavours: In a few instances I have found rather objectionable flavour in some of our butters, one in particular that I can only describe as a "soda" flavour. This is probably due to the excessive use of a neutralizing agent in the cream before pasteurizing. In cases where a neutralizing agent is necessary great care should be exercised to prevent the flavour of the butter suffering thereby.

Colour: Our makers should be absolutely sure that their butter is perfectly straight in colour before packing. Butters that are "streaky" or "marbled" in colour are not wanted at Home, and I have known of instances where clients have returned New Zealand creamery to the agents or firms from which it was purchased owing to this defect. The only destination for such butters is the blending establishment.

Salting: Irregularity in salting is rather too prevalent. Every attention should be paid to the salting of the butter to see that it is regular, as the British public are rather particular in their tastes in this respect.

Moisture-content: I regret to have to report that some of our brands have been found on analysis here to contain over the limit. Too much importance cannot be made of this matter, and producers are earnestly advised to take every possible precaution to see that no butter is sent away from their creameries containing over the legal percentage of moisture allowed by law. I would recommend that 14 per cent. be the limit aimed at. This will allow of a fairly safe margin to allow for the moisture irregularities during the churning and working of the butter. If our producers are to retain the confidence of the trade here, our butter must be above suspicion in the respect of excessive moisture-content. Persistence in a continuation of this evil can only result in serious financial loss to our producers. Our producers should require no second warning, as it is of vital importance to our dairying industry that the people who deal in our dairy-produce should feel and know that the article in question is above suspicion.

Packages: Our butter-boxes are satisfactory, but I notice that the use of two pieces of timber in any particular side of a box has the tendency to weaken the package considerably.

Use of the word "Danish": I have seen quite a quantity of our creamery butters with an advertisement inside the lid of the package indicating that the contents are manufactured from pasteurized cream on the Danish principle, &c. I recommend that the use of the word "Danish" be discontinued as early as possible.