

TELEGRAM from the Right Hon. the PRIME MINISTER to the HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR NEW ZEALAND, dated 2nd November, 1917.

Butter: With reference to my telegram of the 18th October and your reply of the 26th October, inform Food Controller that I met to-day in conference a committee of butter-producers completely representative of the industry in the Dominion, and to which I made known contents of your telegram 26th October, which embodied offer of Food Controller to purchase the present season's exportable output. The committee made strong representation that the cost of production had enormously increased through having to pay more for labour, transport, fuel, and all farming and manufacturing requisites, and that the butter-producers of the Dominion comprise the smallest settlers, upon whom the increase of cost of production presses most heavily. Moreover they pointed out that butter has registered a less increase in value than other primary products. Notwithstanding the foregoing they will accept the price of 157s. per hundredweight f.o.b. for first-grade creamery butter with a reduction of 1s. per point for lower grade, but urge that at least 80 per cent. of any profits realized be returned to the producer, and I sincerely trust that the Food Controller will accede to this request. The committee also point out that the arrangements suggested by Food Controller regarding payment of interest are not acceptable to producers because they cannot arrange finance on this basis, and request that 90 per cent. of the value of the butter be paid after it has been in grading-store for twenty-eight days. Storage at current rates after twenty-eight days and all risks from factory-door to be taken by Imperial Government. The committee inform me that they honestly think they should receive a higher price than 157s. per hundredweight, and in view of all circumstances I consider an increase is justified, and should be glad if you will make a personal appeal to the Food Controller to see if it is not possible to obtain advance in price. Make strongest representations, and telegraph reply with least possible delay.

TELEGRAM from the Right Hon. the PRIME MINISTER to the HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR NEW ZEALAND, dated 7th November, 1917.

Butter and cheese: With reference to my telegrams of 31st October and 2nd November: In view of all the reasons which have been stated in these and previous telegrams as to the necessity for decision on part of Food Controller at earliest possible moment, hope you will press for immediate reply. New Zealand Government being daily pressed by producers and those concerned in financing industry, and the long delay which has occurred in obtaining definite settlement is causing embarrassment and inconvenience.

TELEGRAM from the HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR NEW ZEALAND to the Right Hon. the PRIME MINISTER, dated 8th November, 1917.

With reference to your telegram of 7th November on the subject of butter and cheese: As mentioned in my telegram of 6th November, I accepted on behalf of producers £7 17s. per hundredweight for butter, and am asking Food Controller to concur in additional terms. I have continued to impress on Food Controller urgency of the position, and the necessity for early decision. Have been assured decision on both butter and cheese will be given not later than 9th November.

TELEGRAM from the Right Hon. the PRIME MINISTER to the HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR NEW ZEALAND, dated 10th November, 1917.

Butter: In reference to my telegram of the 2nd November, and yours in reply communicating that you had accepted the Controller's offer of 157s., and that you were discussing terms and conditions with the officials of the Food Controller's Department, I should be glad if you would arrange for the Food Controller and the London Tonnage Committee to provide space for butter in the steamers which are now on the loading-berth in New Zealand, and any others to arrive hereafter. Butter is accumulating fast in the grading-stores, and it is highly important that some of it should be shipped with the least possible delay. It will also be necessary for the Food Controller to arrange for funds to be made available in New Zealand to cover purchases. Please do all that is necessary, and advise Treasury with regard to funds. The amount immediately required will be about £100,000.

TELEGRAM from the Right Hon. the PRIME MINISTER to the HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR NEW ZEALAND, dated 13th November, 1917.

Butter and cheese: Great inconvenience and intense irritation being caused by absence of definite information regarding details butter and cheese purchase. Government being inundated with telegrams and inquiries from dairy companies regarding finance, and position has now become acute.

MEMORANDUM from the Right Hon. the PRIME MINISTER to His Excellency the GOVERNOR-GENERAL, dated 15th November, 1917.

The Prime Minister presents his compliments, and begs respectfully to request that His Excellency will be so good as to transmit the following telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies:—

"Butter and cheese: My Ministers are in receipt of telegraphic information from the High Commissioner for New Zealand dated 13th instant, intimating that the details in regard to the