

PRODUCTION.

Notwithstanding the partially adverse weather conditions referred to, the production of cheese for the year has been in excess of the quantity dealt with for the corresponding period of the preceding year. As will be seen from the quantity tables contained in this report, this increase amounted to 71,795 cwt., or 6·27 per cent. above the production for the 1918-19 season. On the other hand, there has been a falling-off in the production of butter to the extent of 61,805 cwt., which is equal to a reduction of 17·7 per cent. during the same period. While the quantity of cheese manufactured per annum has steadily increased for many years past, there has been a yearly drop in production of butter as from the 1917-18 season, and this reduction has been greater during the season under review than in any other year. As mentioned in previous reports, the main reason for the decrease in quantity is due to lower relative prices obtainable for butter as compared with the price for cheese. In expectation of producers being allowed to receive higher market prices after the end of the present contract to sell to the Imperial Government—which expires in July—a number of the dairy companies at present manufacturing cheese have been making preparations to manufacture butter. This action is deemed advisable owing to the present high price for butter in Great Britain being far above normal. If these prices continue and producers are allowed to take advantage of them in accordance with pre-war arrangements for marketing, it will undoubtedly mean a large increase in the production of butter in the Dominion during next season. In view of the present world-shortage of butter and its importance as a food for the people it is to be hoped that those engaged in this branch of dairying will be given every encouragement to produce the maximum quantity in the years to come.

EXPORTS OF BUTTER AND CHEESE.

Although the production of butter was only moderately less than for the previous year, the quantity exported for this year shows a big decrease as compared with last year's figures. This is accounted for by the fact that very little butter available for export remained in store on 31st March, 1919, whereas on the same date in 1918 large stocks were awaiting shipment. In addition to this the quantity of butter in store at the end of the year under review totalled 186,715 boxes. Cheese, on the other hand, shows an increase both in production and exports, the total shipments being 351,907 cwt. in excess of last year's figures. This quantity, however, more than represents the actual increase in production, as the total in store awaiting shipment on 31st March, 1919, was considerably greater than that in store at the end of the present year.

The following tables show the quantities and classes of dairy-produce exported from the various grading-ports. Where not otherwise specified the figures refer to the year ended 31st March, 1920. The weight of a package of butter may be taken as 56 lb. net, and that of a package of cheese as 160 lb. net.

Creamery Butter to United Kingdom.

Port.	Total Packages.	First Grade.	Second Grade.	Third Grade.
Auckland	327,031	305,138	21,591	302
Gisborne	4,720	4,720	..	..
New Plymouth	42,356	42,249	107	..
Patea	570	390	180	..
Wanganui	14,371	12,814	1,557	..
Wellington	58,530	57,394	1,136	..
Lyttelton and Timaru	33,845	32,554	1,291	..
Dunedin	9,229	8,838	391	..
Totals	490,652	464,097	26,253	302

Whey Butter to United Kingdom.

Port.	Total Packages.	First Grade.	Second Grade.	Third Grade.
Auckland	6,968	397	6,288	283
New Plymouth	4,644	2,963	1,681	..
Patea	8,150	5,708	2,442	..
Wanganui	1,171	305	866	..
Wellington	6,445	5,476	957	12
Lyttelton	394	315	75	4
Dunedin	465	375	90	..
Totals	28,237	15,539	12,399	299

Dairy Butter to United Kingdom.

Port.	Total Packages.	First Grade.	Second Grade.	Third Grade.
New Plymouth	58	17	41	..
Wellington	46	..	..	46
Totals	104	17	41	46