

52. It is a sacrifice when anybody sells his products at less than what they can get in the market?—There is an important factor that you are losing sight of. Those engaged in the dairy industry have had the general support of this community which has put them in the position that they can now put their butter in a marketable condition in the Old Country. They could not have done that without the assistance which has been given by the whole community, and now they are going to penalize us for doing so. Surely after the Government has spent money in importing stock and the breeding of stock—

53. *The Chairman.*] But the farmer has had to pay for it?—The whole country has had to pay for it in the shape of taxation. You have subsidized steamers with refrigerating-space, and lend money for cold storage.

54. *Mr. Hawken.*] No, that is not correct?—The dairy-farmer does not stand on his own bottom in arriving at his present position.

55. *Mr. Poland.*] Any expenditure that the Government has incurred in assisting the farming community should be paid for, you think, by the farmers themselves, but you would not advocate that it should be paid for by the butter-producer: he is only one of the classes engaged in farming. Do you want to single out the dairy-farmer?—The dairy-farmer is to get the enhanced price for the butter sold in the Old Country—he alone is going to get it.

56. And also the cheese-farmer and the butterfat-producer?—The whole of those men might be taxed.

57. Nearly all the farmers in Taranaki are producing cheese and not butter, and why should they escape?—That is a question you should be able to answer better than I can, as members of Parliament entrusted with the country's welfare.

58. You are giving the point of view of the consumer?—Yes, I am trying to.

59. And that the price should be kept down?—Yes, in the interests of the community.

60. *Mr. McCombs.*] You would be interested in the statement made here this morning that the price of land has nothing whatever to do with the price of butter, and in every balance-sheet the Committee has had before it there is a first charge made of interest on the land. You suggested there might be an export tax, a land-tax, or an income-tax. Might not all those taxes be imposed for the purpose of providing an equalization fund?—Yes, if necessary, most decidedly so.

61. Then it would press lightly on all of them?—Yes.

62. Then the wealthy man who got butter at a low price would more than pay for what he saved through the tax he would have to pay?—Yes, that would get him. According to his wealth he would pay more.

63. *Mr. Atmore.*] In regard to the price of land and the interest on it that has to be earned, is not the price of land made up by the price of the products?—I believe I stated that. In my opinion the price of the produce determines the price of the land, not the price of the land determining the price of the produce.

64. *Mr. Kellett.*] You state that, in the opinion of the Council, the issue of ration tickets would be objected to?—Yes.

65. You do not state what you base your objection on. I take it from your remarks that you object to it because we live in a community which overproduces that commodity. You could understand that system prevailing in a country where there is a shortage?—Yes, and it should then be rationed in the true sense of the word. According to their needs the people should be supplied. That would be the interpretation of rationing that would be acceptable.

66. What is the opinion of your Council on the system of rationing in a country which can export, against a country like Britain which has to import where there is a scarcity and necessarily high prices? Is that one of the reasons why you object to the export tax—because we are in a community that is able to produce in excess of our requirements, against a country in which there is a shortage, and that the rationing system should come from the other end and not from this end?—I do not get the crux of your question. I think the rationing system is degrading.

67. It may be necessary?—If it is necessary, then it should apply to every one regardless of the question of wealth. If there was rationing owing to scarcity, then every one would get in proportion to their needs.

68. *Mr. J. R. Hamilton.*] You seem to think that the whole increase in the cost of butter hinges round an enormous speculation in land. Do you think that if all the land was leasehold it would obviate that?—No. I think the increase is due to famine prices and the demand for it at high prices in Europe. I say there is a big tendency forcing you that way due to the gambling that is taking place in land.

69. Nearly all the witnesses from your point of view have laid the blame on to the high prices of land. They do not seem to place nearly the same importance on the high cost of production as on the high cost of land. They seem to think that the land speculator and what the land agent is getting out of it has raised the price of land, and that that is the chief cause of raising the price of butter?—I would like to ask you a question.

70. Very well, I will answer it if I can?—Has the cost of producing butter from butterfat gone up since the war?

71. Yes; gone up, I think, 1s. per pound?—The converting of it from butterfat into butter?

72. We have to pay £80 a ton for wire when before the war we paid £12, and £12 for manures for which we previously paid £4, and wages have increased, as you know?—Yes.

73. And the tendency is to lay the whole of the blame on the increased price of land?—Yes.

74. If the land was on leasehold, would not the man sell his goodwill the same as in the freehold?—Then there is no difference.

75. How are you going to abolish it?—Abolish private ownership in land—make it national.

76. Supposing the nation, or the country, or the Government owned the whole of the land, is it no good to them without somebody will work it?—Yes, that is so.

77. You would have to apportion it out to each man?—Yes.

78. He would get a lease of it?—Yes.

79. Could he not sell the goodwill of his land?—Who would he sell it to?

80. To the man who wanted to buy?—But if it was nationalized!