

15. How did you arrive at 1s. 8½d. as the cost of production and 2s. as the receipts?—I have to put in all expenditure. The cost of production is 2s. 8½d.

16. There should be a profit at the difference between 1s. 8½d. and 2s.?—I have allowed 6 per cent. on my invested capital.

17. *The Chairman.*] Can you give the Committee some information in regard to the general work of a farmer, as to the rate of wages allowed per hour and what is paid for assistance?—I have been able to keep the cost of manufacture down to the point I have done simply by the miserable pittance taken for myself—namely, 6d. an hour. To take £200 out of the business I had to draw £74 out of my capital account.

18. What time do you start work in the morning?—At 5 o'clock, and I average about eleven hours a day.

19. How long does the milking take?—About a couple of hours, including going for cows and washing machine.

20. It has been suggested that the farmer has certain spare time on his hands: what do you do after finishing breakfast?—I finish milking and then go to breakfast. After that I go to the creamery, feed the calves, wash the cans, and at this time of the year go round every one of the cows, which may occupy some time, because some of the cows may be sick. It is very difficult to say what a farmer does from day to day.

21. Do you work during the whole of the day?—Yes, the whole day, and only stop for not more than half an hour for meals. There is ploughing and haymaking to be done, and the green crops for the cows to be attended to. It has been said that the high rate of late and the increased wages have caused the high price for butterfat; but there is one thing that has to be taken into consideration. Supposing a farm changes hands six times, out of that the land agent gets 15 per cent., the Government 6 per cent., and the lawyer 4 per cent.: that is 25 per cent., or a quarter of the capital value that has to be paid for out of the butter. That must be a big element in the cost of butterfat.

22. How would the farmer manage if he did not have the Government or the land agent to finance him?—The land agents do not finance him. I should like to make it known to the public that the farmer at the present time is working at a loss if he takes a proper wage for himself. There is no doubt about that. I would like representatives of the public and the members of this Committee to go round with me and I could show you a picture that would open your eyes. I will show you women far advanced in pregnancy, with other children in their arms, getting out of their beds at 4 o'clock in the morning, going to the bails, and milking fifteen or sixteen cows by hand; and also young children dragged out of their beds to milk cows and then have to walk long distances to school afterwards. Is the farmer to be blamed for this? I say emphatically he is not. He is compelled to do it to keep his head above water. There is a certain section of the community threatening to cripple our industry if we do not bring the price of butterfat down. My answer to those men is, let them do one hour's more work per day and they can have their bread buttered on both sides.

23. *Mr. Hawken.*] How many cows would one man milk?—Where a man does the thing properly one man with the machine could attend to sixty cows.

24. What is the average?—One man to one machine.

25. How many cows would a man milk with one machine?—The average is nine cows per hour.

26. *The Chairman.*] A farmer could not afford to provide a man for each machine?—No, and therefore you have to get the members of the family to help.

27. *Mr. Hawken.*] Under ordinary circumstances, with an ordinary herd, how many cows does each individual milk with the machine?—Well, that is according to the size of the herd. There should be one man to one machine, or one child to one machine.

28. *Mr. Powdrell.*] The average would be about twenty cows per child?—In two hours' milking.

29. What do you think the average number would be to each person—twenty? How many cows do you milk?—I milk about thirty-three, and there are three of us, two children and myself.

30. That works out at eleven cows each?—Yes, and that takes an hour and a quarter or an hour and a half.

31. *Mr. Hawken.*] You do not think a man could milk thirty-three cows and do justice to them?—Not with the machine. Not if he kept the machines going he could not.

32. He would take longer over it?—He could do it if he worked with a single plant, but what is the good of burning oil for a single plant?

33. *Mr. Hockly.*] I know one farmer who milks sixty-four cows himself and feeds the pigs?—I could milk a hundred cows by myself, with six lots of machines, if I did not strip them.

34. *Mr. Hawken.*] Could you give me any idea how much labour it takes to milk a cow? You have put down 150 hours per cow for the season: could you give the Committee some explanation as to how you get at that?—That is only the cows. It may take you two or three hours to milk the cows. I have thirty-three cows. I put the cups on and take them off, and the children do the stripping.

35. *Mr. Powdrell.*] You have averaged the hours you work on the farm and divided it by thirty-three cows?—No, I have not gone into those figures at all.

36. *Mr. J. R. Hamilton.*] By rights you have to do that, because all the other hours worked on the farm have a natural bearing on the milking of the cows?—Yes.

37. The cows would not be there if you did not do the other work?—Yes. When a man brings down a profit and loss account and a debit and credit statement it speaks for itself.

38. *Mr. McCombs.*] How long have you had your farm?—Six years.

39. And you paid £64 an acre?—Yes.

40. Do you know what the previous owner paid?—I think he made £600 or £700 out of it, but he sustained a loss.

41. He made a profit out of the land?—He made a profit in selling the land, but made a loss on the working of the farm.

42. Is not that the real cause of the hardship that the worker of the farm has to suffer to-day: he is loaded with more interest than he has any right to be loaded with? What is the value of