

91. You say you do not view very favourably the idea of rationing. Do you think it is right that the small dairy-farmer should supply butter cheap to the wealthy man of the town?—No, I do not.

92. How are you going to get away from that if you do not take up the rationing idea?—I do not know. I simply said I would go on short rations rather than take a ration ticket.

93. We are trying to solve this problem and naturally look to men like you to throw a little light on it. None of us want to provide the wealthy man with cheap butter, because we consider that the men making money out of the handling of the produce get a great deal more money out of it than the producer. We should not have to supply him with cheap butter, but we want some means whereby we can provide the poor man with cheap butter?—I will give a definite answer in regard to that. If that is suggested or recommended by this Committee, then those who choose to apply for a ration ticket can have it and those who do not need not take it. I would have no objection to the ration ticket on those lines. The only thing I said was that I would much rather do something else than apply for it. But there are any number of people in this town who would apply for a ration ticket, and many others who should not apply for it would apply.

94. Do you not think many men would be too proud to apply for a ration ticket?—I do not know that self-respect is pride.

95. You say that £3 10s. in the country is equal to £5 in the towns?—£3 10s. and found.

96. There was a case here the other day when a man was sued in the Court for debt. He was earning £5 a week, and the Magistrate would not make an order for the amount the man was sued for?—I should not think he would.

97. If you say a wage of £3 10s. in the country is worth £5, how is it that the people in the towns will not go into the country when they are so urgently required?—I will answer that. If Mr. Harkness, who made the statement, is prepared to find employment for, say, fifty men—efficient men—at £5 per week, I will guarantee to find them.

98. *The Chairman.*] That is, in the country, farming?—Yes.

99. *Mr. J. R. Hamilton.*] If you put an advertisement in the paper to-morrow for a clerk you would get a hundred applicants?—That is a poor lot, the clerk's.

100. Yet if he put an advertisement in the paper for a ploughman at £3 10s. a week and found you perhaps would not get one applicant. How do you account for it, when there is so much work in the country for the people? Why will the people not go out into the country?—Mr. Harkness made the statement that the wages paid by dairy-farmers was £3 10s. a week and keep, which is equivalent to £5 per week. If he wants fifty men, and assuming the labour is as short as he says, then I will find him fifty efficient men at that money.

101. *Mr. Poudrell.*] Milkers he was referring to?—Yes, milkers.

102. *Mr. J. R. Hamilton.*] One witness before the Committee said that if the people in the towns would work one hour longer a day they could have their bread buttered on both sides?—I do not take notice of such statements.

103. Seeing they work such a great deal longer hours in the country than in the towns, do you not think they could work an hour longer here?—I am not here to say. I work about twelve hours a day myself, and I leave the other fellow to do what he thinks right.

104. *Mr. Atmore.*] In speaking of the case of the dairy-farmer who in 1914 was producing sufficient butter so that he could average £5 a week, I think there was a slight misconception. I did not mean the price of the butter would have to be doubled, I meant that his money income on the same production of butter would have to be doubled before he was on the same footing as in 1914?—Quite so.

105. You quite agree with that?—Yes.

106. *The Chairman.*] The statement is made by the representative of the Agricultural Department to the effect that to-day the average payment per hour to the farmer is 1s.: do you consider that a reasonable price?—No, I do not.

107. You realize that the season is just commencing for the new season's supply of butter?—Yes.

108. You know there is a proposal for a contract with the Imperial Government to fix the price to the farmer and to the producer for the coming year?—Yes.

109. In your Council have you discussed the question of butter at all?—It has to be discussed next Thursday.

110. Do you think this is the right time to go into the question and arrive at a decision as to what is to be done for the future in regard to the price of butter for the coming year? Are we to act now, or should we wait till after the season has opened before doing anything?—Well, in my reply I would not care to be definite on the matter. A matter of that kind wants to be thought out. Notice should be given of the question, as you say in the House.

111. I am only asking you a simple question—I am not trying to trap you?—No, I understand that.

112. I will put it in another way: In a letter which has come back from one branch of several organizations of labour it states that the time is not ripe to deal with the question yet. Do you think it is or that it is not?—Well, I might modify my reply on more mature consideration, but I think this the most opportune time to consider it.

HENRY WORRALL examined. (No. 10.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What is your position?—I am the representative of the Canterbury Trades and Labour Council.

2. Has your Council had any opportunity of discussing the question of the price of butter?—We have generally considered the question of foodstuffs, and in regard to butter we were unanimously of the opinion that butter-prices should not rise. There is an idea in the minds of some men that the Arbitration Court could equalize matters, but we look at this question from a broader view than that. We realize there are other individuals, such as salaried men, pensioners, and various others who would be hit equally with us if there was any rise in the