

8. You have told the Committee how the man with the land is advised that directly the price of produce goes up he should take every penny out of it by the enhanced value of the cost of the produce?—I wished to show how the gambling instinct is played to by the land agents.

9. Is there not another phase to it? Take the flax-worker who earns a good wage: when the price of flax goes up does he not say, "The owners are getting an enhanced price, we are going to have it too"?—You mean the employee?

10. Yes; does he not adopt the same attitude?—Yes, but that is a factor operating in his case. That is a levelling-up of wages. He cannot go much above what the standard level of wages is or else the flax-miller is besieged with men seeking employment.

11. But when the price of flax goes up the employee demands that he should have a share of that, and I am not saying he should not. You have given us a nice picture this morning, but there is the other side of the picture?—But I cannot see how the flax-milling is the other side of the dairy-farmer.

12. We were speaking in general terms?—Yes.

13. Now, in regard to the export of butter, you suggested that there should be an export tax?—No, I do not wish to be misunderstood. We are laymen and perhaps do not understand these things, but those are the methods that appeal to us. Either place a special tax on incomes or a tax on the butter going out of the country, or place a special tax on land-values. Those are the methods that strike us.

14. Assuming we put a tax on butter, what about cheese, meat, and wool? Would you suggest that it should go on the whole lot?—Are you not opening a larger question than the one which the Committee was brought together for.

15. No, we are not?—You are opening up the whole question of the private ownership of land.

16. You say you are speaking from a layman's point of view; you are not engaged in the industry; and if a tax were put on butter to-morrow the bulk of the people producing butter would go out of the manufacture of butter into the manufacture of cheese?—Yes. At the present moment there is an exceedingly high demand for butter in the Old Country, and that is why butter is going up, because there is not the same demand for cheese.

17. Cheese is bringing a better price?—Then why do not they get the better price? I am told—and you practical men will know whether the statement is correct or not—that one pound of butterfat will make two pounds of cheese. Of course those things will operate against a man going in for one thing as compared with the other.

18. The contracts have already been made, and the price of cheese pays the farmer better than the price of butter. Then another industry has started—namely, Glaxo—which is better still; but there are conditions in regard to supplying different lines. For instance, the cheese man does not get the skim-milk, which the dairy-farmer does. The dairy-farmer will probably raise so-many calves. Cannot you see that if you put a tax on butter the farmer would say, "I am not going to sell any more butter, I am going into cheese"?—But if Parliament was sincerely desirous of conserving the health and well-being of the people as a whole they would follow that up with a tax on cheese.

19. Would your Council favour a tax on all farm products or on butter only?—When we are considering questions of this description we are all practically in the secondary industries, and we lack the necessary information that we should get.

20. Then you cannot say?—No.

21. You heard the question put to the previous witness that possibly a ration ticket could be given to enable the people of the working class to get butter at a reasonable price?—Mr. Chairman, the idea of ration tickets would never be accepted in this country unless ration tickets were given to everybody regardless of who they were. Your system of ration tickets would mean that the man of money could purchase any amount of butter, when the true meaning of rationing is not in it. The true meaning would be that regardless of wealth each family would get so-much according to the number.

22. The question I put to the previous witness was whether he favoured such a system being introduced, and he said he did not agree with it; but if it was introduced and the Government saw that the worker got a ration ticket and that the man who could afford it should pay the proper price, would you favour it?—No, I do not agree with it. It is lowering the dignity of labour, and I do not think the dignity of labour should be lowered at all.

23. You say emphatically that the introduction of a ration ticket for butter for the worker would never be accepted?—Yes, that is my opinion.

24. Realizing that this is the time for the export of butter and for the contract with the Imperial Government, in your opinion is this the time for the Committee to deal with the matter, or should we wait till later?—I want to understand that. This waiting till later; does that mean that the butter will remain at the same price?

25. No, the season is commencing at the end of this month. Supposing the price of butter was put up, should the Government or the Committee settle the price of butter immediately, or wait till later and see what is going to happen in the matter of price?—I cannot see what is going to alter your view in the future.

26. The Committee has received from the Alliance of Labour a letter to the effect that they do not think the time is ripe?—If you are face to face with the question of fixing the price of butter to-day, then I think you should to-day deal with it.

27. What do you think is the average consumption of butter per head?—I could not say.

28. *Mr. Hockley.*] How do you reconcile your statement that the fees which the land agents earn in the sale of land increases the cost of land when it is the seller who has to pay out the commission and not the purchaser?—Well, when a man is selling and is fixing the price he will sell at he will take into consideration all the payments he has to make in the transfer of that land, which, if I am correctly informed, includes 5 per cent. on the first £500, 2½ per cent. up to £1,000, and 1½ per cent. upwards: he will take all those things into consideration when he sells.