

43. In each centre?—Yes; the question of the dairy pool has been submitted to practically every meeting throughout the Auckland District called for the purpose of discussing dairy matters, and the question has been dealt with most exhaustively.

44. You have taken the resolution for and against the Bill at all these meetings?—Not in every case, but in nearly every one.

45. So that you would know who are in favour or not?—I think that 90 per cent. of them are. I know they are all the time, in fact.

46. *Hon. Mr. Ngata.*] You said that you wish to hold over supplies in order to control to some extent the supplies in London. Have you gone into the question of the expense entailed by holding over supplies?—Last year on holding over we made approximately £50,000 on butter, which amount was returned to our people.

47. Having satisfied interest charges, &c.?—Yes, the interest is charged. We pay 3 per cent., bank-rate interest, in London.

48. Mr. Maxwell said something on the matter of depreciation and shrinkage: what has been the experience of your company in that connection?—We have not lost a shilling for shrinkage for the last two years. The butter is put up in boxes of 56 lb. to the box, and shrinkage is allowed for.

49. Is there any organization in existence now for assisting in connection with freights, and also for regulating supplies and shipments—generally to assist the shipping companies in that direction?—Not a specific organization. The National Dairy Association's committee on behalf of the industry have done this work voluntarily. They have no legal standing in any way. They make contracts on behalf of the industry, but there is no compulsion on any factory to come in when certain arrangements are made regarding shipping by contract. The fact is that the shipments have not been regular, to my way of thinking. I do not think they will be until arrangements are made under which the whole of the produce in the freezing-stores of New Zealand is cleared not less than once a month. When the supplies are regularly arranged for in this way the possibility of erratic shipment will be overcome.

50. *Mr. Field.*] The storage will not be a serious matter, will it?—The difficulty about regular supplies, if overcome, should far and away counteract any small increased store charges in London.

51. Do your factories in the main approve of the Bill as it stands?—They would like to see a different system, but they are prepared to support it. We believe in compulsion.

52. *Mr. Forbes.*] You think that if this Board is set up with that one authority handling the whole produce of New Zealand you would be better off under that system than under your own?—Yes. We have our own organization, we have established some measure of control, and we think it will be better for the industry if the whole of New Zealand is brought under a similar system.

53. Will it not depend on the personnel of the Board if you want to do better, and their satisfactory handling of the whole of the dairy produce of New Zealand?—I say so because there is always the possibility that they will be able to make some considerable improvement.

54. You think it would be possible to give the Board full control, as it were, and that such pressure will be brought upon Tooley Street as to obtain for us a better price for our butter?—I do not think that, but I do think that we can get a sufficient number of intelligent men in the industry to come to the front to see that their produce is at stake. The difficulty is to get the people to take a national interest in the affairs of the country, because they have nothing at stake. The National Dairy Association did not receive the support it should from the best men; they had very little official power. If the various companies are going to place their produce in the hands of a Board composed of the best men in the industry, and who are vitally interested in it, and who will take a part in the business, the proposal should be a great success.

55. You do not think it is possible for the Board to undertake the marketing entirely?—No, it cannot be done. I believe a Board is absolutely necessary, as you cannot establish control without it.

56. If you gave them the power you might get a Board that would try to do it, and they might possibly make a mess of it?—I am satisfied the Board would never do anything that would seriously affect themselves, as they are going to lose more than anybody else.

57. Although they may do it with the best intentions?—I do not think they would.

58. You know, of course, that a well-meaning person often causes a great deal of trouble?—Yes; but we represent a quarter of the stuff exported, and we are prepared to hand it over to a Board.

59. And you are prepared to hand it over to a Board to do the business for you?—Yes.

60. *Mr. Masters.*] Is it the intention, or would it be wise, under a Dairy-produce Pool Bill, to do away with the individual brands of the butter?—That is entirely a matter for this Committee, but my opinion is—we have come to no decision on the point—that it should be settled by the Board when they get to work. Personally, I think we should have a national brand, all other brands being a waste of time. If we grade the butter in three or four qualities, allowing the brand to carry the quality, we could then go in for a system of national advertising and spend from £10,000 to £20,000 on boosting New Zealand butter. At present we advertise some individual brand that half the time is not available to the public.

HERBERT BOND examined. (No. 9.)

1. *The Chairman.*] Do you wish to make a statement?—Yes. I am a British subject, born in England; went to Australia first, and then landed here. I have had about twenty years' experience as a dairy-farmer. I represent the Baines Dairy Company, the Mangatāinoka Dairy Company, the Manawatu Reliance Company, the Oroua Downs Dairy Company, the Mangawhata Dairy Company, and the Tiakitahuna Dairy Company.