

Mr. A. GUILD examined. (No. 22.)

1. *The Chairman.*] Your full name, Mr. Guild?—Andrew Guild.
2. And you are representing?—The Milford Dairy Company, Temuka.
3. Will you make a statement?—Yes, sir. I am a dairy-farmer myself, and I am chairman of directors of the company I represent; and I hold here a number of telegrams and letters from various co-operative companies in Canterbury, mainly south Canterbury and mid Canterbury [documents handed in]. One of those companies has already been mentioned to you by Mr. Waite. That is the Waimate Company, in the district I represent. The companies are all co-operative dairy companies—Temuka, Waimate, Clandeboye, Mount Hutt, Staveley, Milford, Orari, Geraldine; and two north Canterbury Companies—Cam and Sefton.
4. *Mr. Field.*] How many in all?—Ten.
5. *Mr. Forbes.*] Have you a telegram from Sefton?—Yes.
6. *Mr. Field.*] How many of the Canterbury companies are you not representing?—I do not know. The total number of suppliers I represent, exclusive of Sefton, is 2,900—2,000 tons of butter and 1,130 tons of cheese.
7. How many factories?—Ten. Now, I may say that all these companies, with the possible exception of Sefton—I cannot vouch for that factory—have discussed and considered this question. Not only have their directorates done so, but the whole of their suppliers have done so—
8. *Mr. Forbes.*] Is not the Sefton Factory closed?—It is not closed yet, sir.
9. I believe it is?—Well, it may be, but I have not heard that it is. Well, the whole of these companies, their directorates and their suppliers, are all overwhelmingly in favour of control. As regards the control clauses of this Bill, it seems to me that the opponents of the Bill are rather making a hobby-horse of the control question, and they are apparently crediting themselves with powers of observation, and with powers of perception, that we are not apparently allowed to possess—that is, as regards pitfalls and traps, &c. Of course the Board might make mistakes, but I do not think that any body of sane men, picked by their fellow-men, are going to fall into any traps or pitfalls that apparently are so clearly seen by the opponents of the Bill. And also, as regards control, I think you have already heard that we had out here in April Sir Thomas Clements, representing Andrew Clements and Son, and he came before the Dairy Council and stated, amongst other things, that he clearly thought, after his visit to New Zealand, and going into the whole question—he clearly thought that we needed control. That statement comes from a representative of a well-known Tooley Street firm, and he made the statement, of course, quite clearly, and after understanding the idea we were working on, that he thought he could go Home and get a number of Tooley Street firms to join with him, and he stated quite clearly that they would be quite willing to work with the New Zealand producers under some form of control. I think you know what has happened. The statement has come out from Home showing the number of firms who have already made the statement that they are willing to meet the New Zealand representative at once. Now, at different times the question has arisen as to whether any of the consignment houses at Home hold up the supplies of dairy-produce—hold up the supplies for a higher price. Well, I had a good long conversation not very long ago with the representative of a pretty big company operating in New Zealand—that is Messrs. Dalgety and Co. They had one of their very highly paid men in London out here, and I asked him that question, and he merely corroborated the statement which has been given to me time and again, that none of those firms, except in very extreme cases, ever hold up supplies. The old-established custom amongst them is to dispose of each shipment week by week, and not to hold it up. And I think you have had the view put before you time and again that those firms are very conservative. They are very hard to shift. They do not depart from their customary practices very much at all—and the statement has been made that none of them ever hold up supplies for higher prices. Now, as regards our dairy-produce being under our control, it is not under our control, to all intents and purposes, after it has been consigned Home. It is not to be expected that we, as dairy-farmers, are going to give instructions to those firms that we consign to at Home. We have to get on with our work; and if they are not taking the risk, or will not take the risk, of holding up supplies, it is not to be expected that we can keep on with our work here and also attend to matters of that sort. They have a knowledge of the trade, and a knowledge of the country. How on earth can we tell them what to do? To all intents and purposes our control has ceased the moment we consign our produce Home. The shipping question has been dealt with time and again by other witnesses, and I do not think I need deal very much with that question now. But there is just one little incident I would like to mention in connection with the shipping of our produce. I am sorry I have lost the newspaper cutting which I would have liked to have read out to you, but it was with respect to the White Star Line of steamers, and it stated that the White Star dividends had gone up from 10 per cent. to 60 per cent. within the last few years—
10. *Mr. Masters.*] On their original capital?—I could not tell you that. I have lost the cutting, as a matter of fact. There is no doubt that their profits have been very huge. Then again, in regard to the question of control: There was a statement made here the other day by, I think, Mr. (Bond?). He made a quotation from the *New Zealand Dairyman* to the effect that we did not need control, that we already had sufficient control, and that we could fix the price of our butter at 9d. and cheese at 3s. wholesale. Well, possibly the butter could be sold at 9d. and the cheese at 3s., but it would not be our butter and it would not be our cheese: it would be some other country's butter or some other country's cheese. There would be no control there at all. That is the kind of statement that has been got up and spread throughout the country. It is absolutely absurd. There is only one other matter I would like to refer to, and that is the question of the voting at the general meeting of the South Island Dairy Association. I know that at least one company which I am