

26. Japan, China, and Java?—Yes. Japan, China, Java, Hong Kong—all through the East.

27. With regard to the position in Taranaki, have there been many speakers at work up there giving their views for or against the Bill? How many have been speaking for the Bill, and how many against the Bill? What has been going on up there?—There is a somewhat difficult position up there. They have been fighting over the Bill all the time, and there is certainly a stronger organized opposition in Taranaki than anywhere else. I think Mr. Corrigan knows the position in Taranaki fairly well, and when he speaks he will probably be able to explain the position up there much more fully than I can.

28. But meetings have been called at least by the promoters of the Bill? Have not the persons interested for and against the Bill held meetings in the Taranaki District? Did not the representatives of the dairy companies hold meetings?—Yes, there have been meetings held. A statement had been made here that at the Stratford meeting a resolution was passed instructing the dairy-company representatives to go back to the dairy companies and consult their suppliers. I may say that no such resolution was ever moved or passed.

29. You think the other side have been fully heard?—Not amongst the shareholders.

30. *Mr. Masters.*] There is one point in connection with the statement made by Mr. Ranford: you stated that the objection of the Stratford Factory was because sufficient information was not submitted to the dairy-farmers?—I have his remarks here that were taken down at the annual meeting on the 20th June.

31. Would you be surprised to learn that the bulk of the farmers are opposing the Bill on altogether different lines?—I would not be surprised.

32. They are quite agreeable to the control so far as shipping is concerned, but they are not agreeable to anything further?—I would not be surprised.

33. Mr. Brash, you say that a resolution was carried at the Stratford meeting to the effect that the dairy-farmers' delegates should go back to their respective districts and call meetings of their suppliers and take a vote as to whether or not they wanted control or otherwise?—I have the minutes of the meeting here, sir.

34. What was the effect of the resolution that was carried?—There were a number of resolutions carried.

35. What was the resolution carried on the 24th May?—You mean on the 25th May, do you not?

36. Yes?—The resolution that you refer to reads, "That the vote on the resolution be deferred, and that each factory be requested to reply in writing as to whether it is in favour or against." This resolution was carried. I may say that it was written out by the man who moved it.

37. In regard to the agitation in Taranaki that has been referred to, do you know of any meetings that were called by the opponents of the Bill apart from the meetings of the promoters of the Bill?—Do you mean a general meeting of shareholders?

38. Yes; they did not call meetings the same as the promoters of the Bill did in the different centres?—I have no record of it.

39. Quite a number of meetings were held, and they were addressed by prominent men, including Mr. Grounds, on several occasions?—Two meetings were held at Stratford.

40. And the farmers were addressed by the promoters of the Bill at New Plymouth?—That was away back in the original proposals—eighteen months ago.

41. I take it that the Taranaki farmers have had an ample opportunity of hearing all the experts speaking in favour of the Bill, and they have come to their present conclusion on what they have heard?—It has been a very hot corner up there.

42. *Mr. Forbes.*] Do you admit that there is a considerable amount of opposition to the Bill?—Yes, there is certainly some opposition to it.

43. It is a fairly substantial one?—Yes.

44. Do you not think that something should be done with a view to arriving at a proper understanding of the position—would it not be better to do that and come to some compromise than to put into operation compulsion?—The question of improving the conditions in connection with the handling of produce has been before the dairy people for about thirteen years—in fact, ever since I have been associated with the National Dairy Association, extending up to a period of thirteen years. There have been ample opportunities to submit suggestions in connection with the matter. I submit, sir, that the present proposal is the best that could be undertaken.

45. You do not think it is right and that no modification is required?—On general principles the Bill is sound.

46. Was the Bill suggested by the National Dairy Association?—No, but by a committee specially set up.

47. Independent of the National Dairy Association?—Yes, that is so.

48. The committee consisted of representatives from the North Island and representatives from the South Island?—Yes; twenty from the North and ten from the South Island.

49. And that committee drew up this Bill?—Yes, in conjunction with the Minister of Agriculture.

50. You heard it expressed in evidence that one of the reasons for the opposition to the Bill was because there was very little faith in the management of the National Dairy Association—you heard that expressed, did you not?—Yes.

51. Do you think there is any justification for making that statement against the National Dairy Association, and that it has failed to protect the interests of the dairy-farmers?—Not so far as it has had power to do so. The best test is in connection with the election of the directors of the National Dairy Association. We find very few changes, although a vote is taken in the way I have