

Are there any means for finding out what is actually consumed by the wheat-growers themselves?—No means whatever. All one can do is to go on the evidence of people who are closely in contact with poultry-producers, such as our own Poultry Instructors and men like that.

Mr. Jenkins.] Has your Department gone fully into the question of the difference in food values between fowl-wheat and the highest grades of wheat?—No, there has been nothing done in that direction.

I suggest you could do a great deal in that respect. I am personally of the opinion that it would pay the egg-producers to use the highest-grade wheat. It is purely a matter of food values. The hens are not like human beings: we eat for the sake of eating, but the hens eat for the sake of sustenance. Do you agree with that view regarding the value of using highest grades of wheat, as representing the association?—I am not representing the association. That is not my duty at all. I am from the Agriculture Department.

I think that side of the question should be gone into by the association with the Department. It is very necessary to know the difference in food values, for the reasons I have indicated. Is there not an embargo upon egg-pulp coming into this country?—There is a restriction on it.

To what extent?—If I remember rightly, Dr. Reakes, it is allowed to come in under certain conditions, with a duty imposed?

Dr. Reakes: The restrictions have the effect of practically preventing it from coming in.

Mr. Jenkins: Is there British preference on the importation of egg-pulp?

Dr. Reakes: I could not say offhand. I think it is a flat rate.

Witness: There has been no egg-pulp coming in, anyhow, within the last few years.

The Chairman: We are not holding an inquiry into the poultry industry. The only real reason for the witness being present is to advise us what effect the poultry industry will have on the wheat industry. We are not really discussing the actual poultry business, but we want to find what relation it has to wheat-production. It has a bearing, undoubtedly, otherwise the witness would not be present, but we should confine our attention as much as possible to the relation the poultry business has to the wheat business.

Mr. Macpherson.] I think it is generally assumed by the Agriculture Department and the experts that, all things being equal, the poultry-grower gets to the maximum of production by using high-class milling-wheat?—Yes, and you will find the farmers everywhere will buy good wheat where they have the opportunity.

The Chairman.] Did you say that the poultry industry was valued at £2,500,000?—That is my estimation of its value, and we should think the value of the raw wheat produced is worth about £2,500,000.

About the same?—Yes.

In the ordinary course, would the fowls require more wheat than the $\frac{1}{2}$ bushel, and, if they require more, why do they not get it?—The big mass of fowls do not require it under present conditions, owing to the other food which they receive.

The relative demand of the poultry industry to the total production of wheat is a very important point?—I do not think the demand is likely to increase, unless the drop in the price of wheat is considerable. To my mind, the wheat position would be affected by a drop in price to the extent that there would be a greater number of specialist poultry-farmers in New Zealand.

According to your evidence, the poultry business now takes one-quarter of the production of wheat in New Zealand. It might be dangerous to the community if it took any more. Some years the wheat-production in the Dominion is as low as 4,600,000 bushels. If the poultry industry developed very largely it would take an undue proportion of wheat which might be required for human consumption?—Yes, it might.

Rev. Mr. Carr.] There is just the point that broken wheat may be as good as whole wheat, and could be used in the event of a shortage of wheat taking place?—Yes; it is used now.

Mr. Macpherson.] The point arises that in the event of a serious drought or anything else causing a shortage of wheat the keeping-alive of poultry would be a serious menace to the health of the people?—Yes, that is so.

The Chairman.] What other prospects are there for the export of eggs? Is there a reasonable prospect?—I should say there is no prospect at all at the present time, unless the costs of handling, &c., are materially reduced.

The poultry-farmer, then, must look to his market in New Zealand?—Yes. My own idea is that later on, if the poultry industry is properly organized in New Zealand, we might be able to keep the price of eggs more even throughout the season in the Dominion, thus allowing a higher grade of production of eggs, and those which could not be advantageously sold on the local market could be converted into egg-pulp for the requirements of New Zealand, and also possibly for export.

Is there much prospect of the number of fowls being considerably increased when you reorganize the business?—I do not think so. At the present time, on the figures we have, we are consuming approximately twenty-five dozen eggs per head of population per annum in New Zealand, and that is pretty high; and the higher you get the more difficult it is to increase it, naturally; although in Canada they claim they are consuming thirty dozen eggs per head of population per annum, which is, of course, an extremely high figure.

What was the cost to the Government of the bonus on eggs?—16s. a case.

What was the number of cases?—7,360, approximately.

Was the whole of the guarantee called up?—There was a difference between the realized price and the guaranteed price of £3 5s. per case.

Rev. Mr. Carr: May I submit that in all these calculations it is very important to know whether the eggs are A-grade eggs, or B-grade eggs, and so on.