

in six months. The only successful plan for the New Zealand factories to adopt is to have good curing-rooms, mature the cheese by natural or artificial heat as soon as possible, and when ready to ship send them to market. From ten to twelve weeks cheese will be ready to move; some were sent at the age of five weeks, but it is exceedingly risky to do so. April, May, and June are the best months for sending cheese to London; the two former especially. All the prime cheese ought to weigh from 70lb. up to 112lb.; at the beginning and end of the season smaller cheese may be made.

The report which is now presented is far from what it ought to be or will be in coming time. When all the factories get into proper working order we shall be able to give the number of cows that supply the milk to each factory, the quantity delivered, the weight of cheese produced, and the number of pigs fattened.

In looking at the operations of the last season, and the reports published, a superficial reader would consider that the outlook for the future is not bright. We must not close our eyes to the fact that every human enterprise at the commencement has unforeseen difficulties to contend with and overcome. Nor would it be difficult to show that this was the case with cheese and butter factories in America and England; and it is clear that New Zealand factories are not exempt from the common rule—that is, having to pay for your experience. A number of factories have been erected without proper knowledge of what would be required, and this involves considerable loss. First, the best market is to be found out, then manufacture, the quality and mould, and the cheese most adapted to the said market. Many changes will have to be made this year, for London is our principal market, and small lump cheese, suitable for colonial purposes, are not the cheese for London. Cheeses from 70lb. to 80lb. are most suitable. Buildings erected without mature consideration and inexperienced managers are certain to involve considerable loss.

There is another source which materially affects the interests of the company. There are farmers who supply milk to the factories whose only interest is to get as much out of the concern as possible without taking any risk; they willingly contribute milk during the season in plenty, when butter is only 5d. per lb. and withhold it in the time when it is scarce, with butter at 1s. 6d. per lb. Even shareholders, without mature consideration, do this; they have only to weigh the consequences to be convinced of the injustice.

Butter factories, where only butter is made, have yet to be tested; but three are nearly ready to commence operations, and a fourth is progressing—Inglewood; Makino, near Feilding; Palmerston North; and Whatawhata, Waikato. For many reasons, butter factories will be found a great convenience and a benefit in localities where the farm-holdings are small and capital difficult to obtain. A small building with a cool cellar is all that is required; the plant and convenient premises may be procured for about £500. A factory large enough to take 800 gallons of milk may be erected for considerably less, if horse- or water-power is substituted in the place of steam. No doubt steam is the best for working the cream-separator. One great advantage butter factories have over those for making cheese only, is that the same amount of skill and experience is not required, and that the butter when made is at once ready for market. Another advantage in connection with butter-making is that, both in the colony and abroad, remunerative prices may be obtained for the superior qualities which the factories cannot fail to make. Sound, well-made butter, in London, never remains on hand unsold. Good brands are invariably sold to arrive; and there are, at all times and seasons in the year, thousands of anxious buyers, and never enough to supply the ever-increasing demand. Granted that the present returns for New Zealand butter from London and elsewhere are not flattering, it must be remembered that thousands of firkins were sent away which could not be sold at any price in the colonial markets. Stale, inferior butter, nine months old, was not fit for any market, much less London. Send only sound, new-made butter, such as the factories will turn out, and good remunerative prices will be returned, and a demand will grow rapidly which New Zealand will not be able to supply.

August, 1884.

GEO. BOWRON.

REPORT ON THE WORKING OF THE ASHBURTON DAIRY FACTORY DURING THE SEASON 1883 TO 1884.

The MANAGER, Ashburton Dairy Factory, to the GOVERNMENT INSPECTOR of DAIRY FACTORIES
Sir,—

Cheese Factory, Flemington, Ashburton, 22nd August, 1884.

I have the honour to submit to you the following report of the work done in the above factory during the past season. A variety of circumstances had seriously militated against our success during the preceding year, which had largely arisen from the difficulties incident to the introduction of a new business of this kind. The effect of climate on the carriage of milk, its cheese-producing qualities, and the capabilities of the pasturage, were all matters of uncertainty, which made the undertaking one of more than usual interest to all lovers of progress in the colony.

The condition and quality of the milk received has been a subject of constant study during the whole time the factory has been at work. Attention to cleanliness and purity must of necessity be among the first duties which claim the attention of a manager, and any person who endeavours to deliver skimmed or otherwise deteriorated milk not only commits an act of petty larceny, but injures his neighbours as well as the factory, and ultimately has returned upon his own head the reward of his misdeeds. For if one man successfully smuggles such in, the fact oozes out amongst the patrons, and others equally unscrupulous follow his example. The natural result, of course, is lower returns, smaller profits, and next year a lower price for the raw material. It is hardly necessary to point out that milk which has been skimmed is always more or less sour in hot weather, as it must remain sufficiently long to allow the cream to rise, thus injuring it for cheese-making on account of too great acidity, independently of the detriment which it has previously received from loss of cream.