

This has brought few complaints, for two reasons: First, because of the steps taken by the Wellington City Council to have the milk adequately cooled immediately on arrival at the balancing-station at Rahui or at its depot; secondly, because payment for milk to the producer carries heavy penalties for milk of inferior quality. This has had the effect of ensuring the delivery of high-quality milk which, even if received one day and used at breakfast-time the next day, still retains its quality.

In extending the hours of delivery in other centres in the attempt to increase the gallonage delivered per roundsman, strict attention must be paid to these points. The climatic conditions prevailing in that particular area must first be considered. Before any attempt is made to lengthen the delivery hours, reorganization of the whole supply of the milk from the producer to the treating-house should be such as to ensure a keeping-quality similar to that now firmly established in Wellington. Even in Wellington, the Commission feels that steps should be taken as soon as conditions are normal (recognizing that under war conditions it is not possible to enforce starting-times that would permit of an earlier delivery) to endeavour to have all milk delivered by 10 a.m. at the latest. An earlier finishing-time than this is desirable and should be possible in the summer—in the winter 10 a.m. appears late enough for completion of delivery. Mothers with small children must be given consideration in this matter, and for them 10 a.m. is the latest time by which milk should be received.

The question was raised during the Commission's hearings as to whether a daylight delivery of milk might not be desirable. There are important advantages and considerable disadvantages under a system of daylight delivery which the Commission does not feel fully qualified to discuss. It is a question, however, which should be given consideration in the light of future organization.

Another important factor affecting cost of distribution is that in Wellington only bottled milk is delivered by the roundsmen, while in Auckland roundsmen deliver both raw and bottled milk, and in a few cases deliver butter and occasionally eggs.

Payment for milk in Wellington is made by the token system, and roundsmen do not collect money or receipt accounts. In Auckland and other centres roundsmen are responsible for collecting money and receipting accounts. Approximately three hours per week (on one particular day) is spent by roundsmen in collecting payments which have not been collected during the round. Other factors affecting Wellington's high gallonage per roundsman is the quantity delivered per customer, which is approximately 2.13 pints, as compared with approximately 1.78 pints for Auckland, 1.95 pints for Christchurch, and 1.91 pints for Dunedin. The reason for this difference in delivery per call is not easy to determine. It is argued, too, that the extensive use of horse-drawn vehicles assists to raise the gallonage delivered per round. While the evidence available certainly favours the efficiency and economy of horse-drawn transport, there are many factors to be taken into consideration in any discussion of the efficiency of horse-drawn as against motor-drawn vehicles.

Auckland appears to have one advantage over Wellington and other areas which might well be considered in any prospective reorganization. A number of depots conveniently distributed throughout the suburbs have been set up in Auckland and from these roundsmen go out to relatively nearby rounds. This has advantages both from a transport point of view and in concentrating the roundsman's time to the maximum extent on actual distribution.

The Commission recommends that all these factors affecting the number of gallons delivered per roundsman be taken into full consideration in any attempt at reorganization. The main purpose of such reorganization must be to increase the number of gallons delivered per roundsman and thus, by reduction in total wages and in transport costs, effect appreciable reduction in delivery costs. Because of the fewer persons engaged on the rounds, better control can then be exercised over the conditions of delivery.

The Commission further recommends that advantages of the Wellington system, such as token payment for milk, delivery of all milk in sealed containers, and the working of full award hours on delivery, be examined and, if practical in each area, be brought into operation as early as possible. The subject-matter of these recommendations is matter suitable for the consideration of Milk Councils or other local authority having jurisdiction over the distribution of milk.

There is another matter that is closely related to the subject of prices and margins but which can be again mentioned at this point. The Milk Department of the Wellington City Council distributes all retail milk in bottles and requires the consumer to pay for the bottles. We recommend that this course be adopted in all areas. Further, the Wellington Milk Department distributes only pint and quart bottles of milk, and at the present time appear to be developing their trade almost completely in pint bottles. The Commission is of opinion that full consideration ought to be given to the advantages of distributing only two sizes of milk-bottle—namely, pints and quarts—and the delivery of milk in half-pint bottles only at the appropriate cost. This matter has also been discussed in the chapter on prices and margins.

On the question of the excessive number of vendors or producer-vendors engaged in the distribution of milk in any area, the Commission recommends that the Central Authority give this matter early attention with a view to devising and enforcing methods of rationalization that will reduce serious wastage of man-power and material involved and protect the consumer against avoidable cost.

PART III.—SUPPLY TO THE ARMED FORCES

CHAPTER 13

The third matter of reference is "The supply of milk for the Armed Forces, including Allied Forces in such areas"—that is, to the four metropolitan areas.

Particulars of all contracts made by the Food Controller for the supply of milk to the Armed Forces have been supplied to us. We have also had the advantage of conferences at Auckland and Wellington with representatives of the Armed Forces, including the Allied Forces, with a representative of the Food Controller, and in Auckland with the Auckland Metropolitan Milk Council. We have examined the returns supplied to us with a view to ascertaining the quantities of liquid milk required, the relation of these quantities to the total requirements of the areas from which the supply is drawn and the relation of the prices agreed upon to the costs involved and to the prices charged for supplies to the civilian population. We have given special attention to the inevitable fluctuations in demand. We have also consulted representatives of the Armed Forces on the question of quality, and have discussed this matter with the Milk Council at Auckland and with vending and producer companies who are responsible for supply.