

upon a rapid separation of the buttermilk and a washing of the fat globules, whereas the Alfa system is a conversion of the high-testing fat to a butter phase.

A return visit was made to Berne for the purpose of attending the first post-war meeting of the "International Dairy Federation." This was an interesting gathering, as prior to 1939 many of the Committees were largely represented by Germans, Austrians, and Italians. The Scandinavians now hold a fair representation. The next international meeting will be held at Stockholm. I felt it inexpedient to press New Zealand's claim for priority owing to the shipping position and the generally unsettled state of food-supplies, &c. Close working with FAO was advocated, but it was unanimously decided that the Federation maintain its own individuality.

*International Standards Conference.*—This was held in London and, in company with Messrs. Wallace and Jervis, of the High Commissioner's Office, I attended most of the meetings. The Committees covering the Dairy Section were presided over by representatives from each of the Dominions.

The following extracts, which relate principally to the quality and condition aspect, are taken from Mr. Were's report :—

*Creamery Butter.*—The average quality of this commodity as inspected soon after discharge from overseas vessels and frequently at patting-plants after storage of varying periods, which depends upon the stock position, may be described as sound, but this does not mean that all of it is as good as it could be. Much of our creamery butter possesses a more or less negative quality, due to its flat, insipid flavour; these features are particularly noticeable among Auckland brands. Where the cream-supply is reasonably sound, I am of the opinion that better butter would result by the use of smaller quantities of neutralizing agents. In my judgment it is most undesirable that New Zealand should produce a high-acid butter for export to Britain, but there seems to be no sound reason for hovering so near the point of neutrality.

I estimate that there is only a small proportion of the population of this country who can differentiate between some of our flat, characterless butter and margarine.

Notwithstanding the foregoing critical comment, New Zealand butter has a high reputation for quality and it is a very rare occasion to find it deteriorated to such an extent as to bring it into a lower category than that indicated by the grade stamp on the package.

*Whey Butter.*—So far as can be judged on the limited quantity inspected of this product of the cheese-factory, I am inclined to the opinion that there is a slight improvement in quality. My impression of improvement may be due to the fact that I have examined more whey butter from Taranaki than from other districts. Some of the Taranaki cheese-factories produce a very high standard of quality in respect to this by-product, and the questions which naturally come to mind here are: Why does Taranaki excel in the manufacture of this commodity? And why do some other districts fail?

At the present time, whey butter is being distributed for consumption, without being blended, in some areas of Britain. This is due to the scarcity of creamery butter and the need for the use of whey butter to meet the ration. If the average quality of New Zealand whey butter was equal to that from Taranaki there would be no serious cause for apprehension, but, unfortunately, this is not so. Cheese companies who, through lack of thought or knowledge, are not producing the highest possible quality whey butter, whether manufacturing it themselves or selling their whey cream to a creamery, are imposing a severe handicap on the interest of all butter-producers.

*Cheese.*—The average quality of New Zealand cheese can be confidently described as sound and its reputation with traders in this country is second to none. My association with the provision trade through connections with the Ministry of Food leads me to believe that the prestige of our cheese was never higher than at present. It is not difficult to find technical faults in much of this produce, the chief of which is bitterness. Perfection in cheese from all countries seems to be an elusive quality, but I am of the opinion that the average quality of this product from New Zealand is at least as near perfect as that from any other source.

Wartime conditions of storing cheese exploded the belief held by many traders here that New Zealand cheese would not mature satisfactorily. At present our cheese, like our butter, is going into almost immediate consumption owing to short supply. This means that it will be consumed before it has a chance of maturing, but this is not the fault of producers, who should be congratulated on supplying a sound raw material and the cheesemakers on their craftsmanship.

*Distribution.*—Under the Ministry of Food rationing system there is no discrimination as between produce from different countries. Butter and cheese are sold as "National" butter and cheese, with the exception of comparatively small quantities of fancy brands from the Continent which are sold at their economic values, such as Rocquefort at 6s. per pound plus 12 points; Danish blue, 3s. per pound plus 12 points, &c. (Every person can spend up to 20 points per month on points goods.)

*Packages.*—Experience is forcing the conclusion that some of our best solid fibre cartons make as good a container for butter as any other in use. Their contents are less vulnerable to contamination by oil-fumes and other extraneous matter than is the case with wood and Saranac packages. It is highly desirable, however, that fibre cartons should be made to resist absorption of moisture caused by condensation, otherwise they become soft and flabby and easily torn, thereby exposing contents to pilferage and contamination.

Mr. Were's duties as a member of the Dairy Technology Institute involve attendance at a number of meetings. He has also represented the Ministry of Food on a considerable number of surveys of damaged produce from other countries as well as New Zealand.