

Manufacturing Methods.—Most cheese-factory managers adopt sound methods of manufacture which result in the production of cheese of good commercial quality. This is indicated by the opinions of the trade and the reports of officers overseas. There is, however, a tendency on the part of some to rush the manufacturing process unduly, which is not in the best interests of quality. A general desire to escape overtime payment is probably the main reason for hurried methods, which would no doubt be extended if it were not for the fact that the majority of managers are quality minded.

Milk Grading.—Although milk grading is mainly performed by sound methods and to satisfactory standards, there is still evidence that some managers adopt a rather tolerant attitude towards border-line quality, which results in some second-grade milk being classified as first. Constant checking by Dairy Instructors has effected considerable improvement, and these efforts will be maintained in the future.

Curing-rooms.—A pleasing feature noted during the year is the improvement in the care and condition of curing-rooms, which is reflected in the clean appearance of the cheese and a comparative absence of mould growth. Though it can be claimed that the season has not been conducive to mould, there is ample evidence of more interest and greater efforts to restrict this growth. A good number of temperature and humidity controlled curing-rooms are in operation and at least one additional unit will be in use next season.

Labour in Cheese-factories.—The staffing of cheese-factories is still not sound in most districts. Numerically there may have been some slight improvement, but the class of operative available is far from satisfactory, and men possessing qualifications academic and otherwise to fit them for a cheesemaking career appear to find better reward for their talents in other industries. Housing is closely linked with this aspect and it is pleasing to note that many dairy companies have realized the value of a sound housing policy and are now building extensively and providing houses of a good type.

INSPECTION OF DAIRY-PRODUCE IN BRITAIN

The London office of the Division provides the final link in the Division's operations. Since the office was established in 1911 the value to New Zealand's dairy industry of its expert watchfulness of the outturn of dairy-produce has been recognized. With their New Zealand experience in London officers can translate consumer demand and trade reaction into terminology understood by the makers, and thus it is that to-day New Zealand makes butter and cheese which in the main meets the requirements of the buyer. The attainment of this objective is influenced, of course, by the distance of the markets from New Zealand, and therefore instead of following the Danish practice of manufacturing high-acid butter, which will not keep, the endeavour has been to cultivate a taste and a demand for sweet cream butter which will store and travel well. In this New Zealand has been outstandingly successful.

Cheese has also been required to withstand storage and transport conditions. To be successful in this, quality must be sound, and the fact that good Cheddar cheese improves with age has been of advantage to New Zealand, particularly as English-speaking people favour Cheddar as against any other of the numerous varieties of cheese.

Reports from the Division's London officers show that butter quality has been well maintained. There is a criticism that some New Zealand butter is inclined to be flat and neutral in flavour. This characteristic is not due to an excess of neutralizing agent, but rather to the fact that fresh cream in some areas is inclined to lack "bloom." The Division's London officers have expressed the opinion that a carefully controlled increase in churning activities would assist in overcoming this flatness and farther that when distributing conditions return to normal it may be advisable to reintroduce a small percentage of "starter" to the cream to give more fullness. The use of "starter" was discontinued after the outbreak of war because of the disruption of normal marketing and distribution.