

DAVID THOMPSON ROY, Dairy-farmer, Dunedin, examined. (No. 15.)

Mr. Roy made the following statement: I have had very considerable experience of dairying, and have been engaged on my own account for fifteen years in the retail sale of milk to the City of Dunedin, and to a certain extent supplying the surplus to a butter-factory. I had experience of the milk-supply before the last regulations were framed and before the Department took over the inspection. At that time conditions in Dunedin were anything but satisfactory. I will quote from the minute-book of the Dunedin Dairymen's Association of a meeting held on 4th August, 1897: "A sub-committee was appointed to wait on the City and Suburban Councils, asking that arrangements be made with Mr. Snowball, M.R.C.V.S., to inspect and report on all dairies supplying milk for local consumption. This was complied with by the City Council, but the suburban councils took no part." This meant the work was only done in part. On the 20th July of the following year "the Secretary was instructed to write to the city and suburban councils drawing their attention to the fact that only dairies sending milk to the city were inspected, and asking their co-operation in securing competent inspection for all dairies and stock, to insure a pure and healthy supply of milk." In the following September the secretary was instructed to write to the City Council "asking if Mr. ——— had a license, and on whose authority it was granted; also to mention that the Inspector blames the Association for giving him extra work in inspecting carts, shops." These were the conditions existing in Dunedin before the Department took over the inspection. After the appointment of Inspectors there was considerable improvement, and, although the regulations were far from being perfect, the conditions existing before were done away with. This very matter of carting pig-feed in the milk-cart: I have personally seen a man cart pig-food in his milk-cans. I saw him bring kerosene-tinsful of pig-food out of a place in the city and empty them into the very cans in which he had brought his milk to town. That was ten years ago. Now, we contend that Dunedin has the best milk-supply of any city in the Dominion. Our Association took up the matter of dairy inspection when the Stock Department appointed an Inspector. We went through the regulations, and had considerable fault to find with them. These faults were brought before Mr. Ritchie, and those which were unworkable have been held in abeyance, and the others had had a very satisfactory effect. The association I represent is quite prepared to admit that the dairy inspection, so far as the city supply is concerned, has been a fair success. One matter we find fault with in the new regulations is in the words which conclude many of the regulations—"to the satisfaction of the Inspector." This particular matter caused us a considerable amount of anxiety. We do not know exactly the qualifications of the Inspectors. We would rather have regulations cast in definite terms, so that a man would know at once where he was without leaving too much to the Inspector's discretion. Regarding the matter of extending the inspection to the whole of the dairy industry, my association and I personally consider it very necessary that inspection should be extended to the whole of the dairies of the country. The dairy industry is the biggest wealth-producing industry in New Zealand. I contend that with careful administration the Department can benefit the industry to such an extent that it might double the present output from New Zealand. I consider the basis of success in the dairy industry in the very near future will be mechanical milking and home separation. These are matters that will come before very long, when if prices were lower you would not be able to meet the extra expense of the creamery business. We must separate our milk at home. At the present time under present conditions the factories, or the bulk of the factories, will not accept home-separated cream. The conditions on the farms will not admit of it, but with proper inspection the system should obtain. While we are quite prepared to admit that inspection applied to the whole of the industry will be beneficial, we do not exactly approve of all the regulations that are here brought forward. For instance, clause 8 says that "every dairy shall be provided with a cowshed suitable for milking purposes." Is it to be inferred from that that milking in the open is to be abolished entirely, and that all milking must be done in a suitable shed? Where settlement is young it is very often a serious matter, for the dairymen would require to have a sufficient building erected before going on with his work. In some instances they require to milk in the open air until such time that they can get a place erected. In regard to the air-space required in the shed, 600 cubic feet would mean a very big building for a considerable number of cattle, and if winter dairying is to be carried on it means that the cattle must be housed every night. Asking for a very large building would result in a very few going to the expense of it. They would rather milk in a smaller shed accommodating only part of the herd, and leave the rest out over night. Sufficient ventilation could be obtained with 500 cubic feet, as provided in the present regulations. Then, the provision to limewash the shed twice a year, in July and January: the times might be amended to more suitable months. The months of October and April would be more suitable in Otago, and for this reason: In January we are in the middle of haymaking and turnip-thinning, and in July, in such a season as the last, we would have the cattle in the byre the whole of the month, only being put out for an hour a day. In the month of October we start putting out our cows every night after being housed all the winter. If the byre is limewashed as soon as the cattle are put out every night it will keep nice and sweet during the hot weather. Then, in limewashing in April it would be done just before the cows are housed during the night again. It would thus sweeten the byre for the winter. It is not a matter of finding fault with the demand, but in pointing out that the months of July and January are not the two most suitable months for doing the work. Then, subclause (f): "All manure and other offensive matter shall be removed to a position distant not less than 30 ft. from every cowshed within two hours after each milking, and the floor of the shed thoroughly cleansed." If this is rigidly enforced we would be in the same position as with the old regulation, which demanded that the cleaning should be before milking. We could not comply with the "before milking" on account of the cattle being in the byre overnight. Now we are in the same position in regard