

which it would be well for us to reconsider together, you will also understand my preference for allowing matters to stand over until he returns.

I appreciate your proposal to allow your office to bear the onus of Thornton's action towards ourselves, but my respect for the heads of your Department negatives your kind intention. Without attempting to discuss the position, beyond dealing with the contents of your letter, I have to say that I cannot accept your argument dealing with Thornton's impartiality. Even had the thing asked for been an impossible one, he might have shown a desire to meet the exigencies of the case, instead of which our request was from the first met in the spirit of obstruction.

I do not know what instructions you refer to as having been given to Thornton, but I assume they would not have prevented him from offering to refer our urgent business to you, although I am now satisfied that had he done so it would have been with the object of getting your confirmation of his own attitude. You say other shippers had similar requests refused by Thornton, and accepted his decision. Here, again, I do not know what are the facts you refer to. I am aware that in July last Messrs. Wright and Stevenson arranged with Thornton through our telephone for a shipment of butter which they were purchasing from and having prepared by us. It was then agreed that the butter was to be put into the freezer some time before Saturday evening, and that it would then be shipped on the following Monday. Our secretary, who was standing by the telephone at the time, then spoke to Thornton, and received confirmation of this arrangement from him. It happened that we were not able to prepare the butter to put into the chamber on the Saturday, and it was finally shipped a week or so later. In this case Wright and Stevenson's urgent business received commendable consideration from Thornton.

I note what you have further to say respecting other people's interests. Will you let me say that we are not without experience as shippers of butter, nor are we inconsiderate of other shippers' interests? Thornton's pretext for involving us in a loss of over £100 for refreezing butter some time ago was due to our having, at the request of the Union Steamship Company, made way for Taranaki shippers, whose names we did not even know, but we did know they were in a tight corner. We then had an acknowledged claim upon space on a west coast steamer, but we gave it up in the general interests. We should probably do the same thing again, and at any time we are not likely to want anything from your Department which would involve the risk of injury to anybody else's property, nor shall we at any time ask your Department for any consideration which ought not to be given to any one else under similar circumstances.

I regret that through the inadvertency of my forgetting that Mr. Cuddie was absent from New Zealand, I have caused you trouble over this matter.

I propose to do myself the pleasure of calling upon you when I am next in Wellington.

Yours, &c.,

WESLEY SPRAGG,

Managing Director.

W. M. Singleton, Esq., Acting Dairy Commissioner, Wellington.

DEAR SIR,—

23rd September, 1908.

Several days since I conferred with you as to the closing-time for the "Tongariro's" shipment, and you were good enough to arrange that the last lot of Ngaruawahia butter would come down by the train reaching here at 2.30 to-day, and the Pukekohe lot by the cattle-train arriving about 5. It may be a little earlier or a little later. It is now half past 3, and we are surprised at receiving your notification per telephone that the Pukekohe butter will be excluded. I explained by telephone that we should have sought to get part of it down by the 2.30 train, although we certainly could not have got it all down by that opportunity. As we are already below our estimates, even a part would have been better than none at all. I deprecate your inconsiderate action in altering the closing-time after making arrangements with us, and that after it is too late to adjust our arrangements; and I further deprecate your manner of addressing me on the subject, and of seeking to garble my remarks *re* the despatch of the Pukekohe butter into a statement that we should have sent it all by the 2.30 train had we known. If you will read what is stated above, which is what I told you per telephone, you will see there is a substantial difference.

Yours, &c.,

H. E. PACEY, Secretary.

Mr. Thornton, Produce Grader, Auckland.

DEAR SIR,—

24th September, 1908.

I enclose for your information a letter addressed to Thornton, Grader at this port. I am sorry that he still retains the disposition of which I have previously had to complain, and that he is at least inconsiderate of our interests. In the present case he consented to an arrangement, suggested by our Mr. Pacey, that he would receive at the freezer as part of "Tongariro" shipment of butter from our Pukekohe factory, which was to arrive by the cattle-train yesterday (Wednesday) afternoon. After we had made our arrangements accordingly, he refused to receive this butter for the shipment in question. I think it right to acquaint you with these facts.

Yours, &c.,

WESLEY SPRAGG,

Managing Director.

Mr. Cuddie, Dairy Commissioner, Wellington.