

that their presence at Onewhero was unexpected, and their pretext or reason (whichever is the proper word) for the visit was not generally thought to be adequate. Indeed, you will gather from the letter written by Mr. Miller that at least his opinion was that they went to Onewhero with the object of discrediting and injuring my company. This, I fear, they did deliberately. They also incidentally and, I think, ignorantly ran a risk of injuring the other company. I cannot believe that you would tolerate such conduct, even if it took place at a "meeting," not even if it was in reply to questions; but the case is certainly not improved when the untrue and insulting reflection upon ourselves took place, as I understand it did, in Mr. Miller's private house, to which, as far as Mr. Miller was concerned, these men had adjourned without invitation, and when the statements themselves were volunteered.

You will remember that in my letter of the 28th August, addressed to the Dairy Commissioner, certain specific charges were made against these men. He, however, has since referred me to you. If the charges are true, they are evidence of pronounced antagonism to ourselves. They also indicate that my company is being wickedly maligned by one or both of these men, and that unwarrantable interference is taking place with the object of injuring my company.

I shall be glad to know definitely in what manner these men will be dealt with, and, if they are to remain in Auckland, what attitude you think my company should adopt towards persons who are wanting in general judgment, and who are guilty of special antagonism and insulting and wicked conduct against ourselves.

For your information I am enclosing copies of letter which I addressed to the Commissioner, and also a copy of Mr. Miller's letter on the subject. May I ask you for the favour of your reply at the earliest convenient date?

Yours, &c.,

WESLEY SPRAGG,

Managing Director.

The Hon. the Minister for Agriculture, Wellington.

DEAR SIR,—

19th December, 1908.

I am obliged to you for yours of the 16th December, and I thank you for the spirit in which you have sent me the unpleasant intimation which it contains. I confess to being surprised at the report, as our overruns, even when full allowances are made for losses in manufacture, do not indicate that we have excess moisture in our butter. In addition to this, we have a rough daily analysis of our butter made at our factories, which we have felt were genuine guides for us, and these have not indicated results similar to your report. It happens that just now, in addition to this, we have had an analysis made by Mr. Pond, Colonial Analyst, Auckland. The boxes which the samples were taken from were taken haphazard from stacks of boxes, being shipments which were being made to the freezing-chambers on the 3rd December. Pond's analysis is very similar to the rough analysis made in our own factories from the same day's make. This, we have supposed, checked our own methods, although we should not suppose that our means are very exact. Pond's return is as follows:—

| Samples. | Anchor. Per Cent. | Dairy. Per Cent. |
|---|----------------------|---------------------|
| Water | 13·06 | 12·97 |
| Fatty acids | 84·61 | 84·83 |
| Curd | 0·47 | 0·80 |
| Inorganic salts | 1·86 | 1·40 |
| | <hr/> 100·00 | <hr/> 100·00 |
| Salts proportionate to water | 14·3 | 10·77 |
| Curd contains milk-sugar in small amount. | | |

I cannot suppose that there has been any mistake in confusing our sample with any other butter by your agent at New Plymouth, and your Department is sure to have competent, skilled men engaged in such delicate work. The conflict between Pond's analysis, which practically confirms our own work, and the results obtained in New Plymouth are puzzling to me.

I am, of course, in sympathy with you in desire to protect the reputation of the Dominion, added to which I am anxious that we ourselves should not get into trouble, and I am very thankful for the assistance which you render. I should take it as a favour if you would put your analyst in communication with Mr. Pond, with the object of discovering a reason for the apparent discrepancy. Of course, it does not follow that you had a sample of butter of the same day's make. On the other hand, it is well that you should know that the daily rough analyses at the factories show foreign matter in our butter of a consistent quality from day to day. Would it be well for samples to be taken from the same box of butter both by Mr. Pond and by your man? My experience with Pond's work has led me to trust him absolutely, and his confirmation of our own estimate of the foreign contents in our butter was causing me to feel quite secure.

We are not using a combined churn and butter-worker in either of our factories. Our Pukekohe factory-manager has expressly objected to having one. We have had one delivered at Ngaruawahia, which we intend to experiment with; but it was delivered late in the season, and has not yet been erected. I should like your opinion upon the combined churn and worker, which I shall be glad to submit to our Ngaruawahia manager for him to check when he experiments. I shall send your report on to Pukekohe for the information of our factory-manager, and I will thank you if you will kindly send me your comments upon the information which this letter contains.

With kind regards and Christmas greetings,

I am, &c.,

WESLEY SPRAGG,

Managing Director.

D. Cuddie, Esq., Dairy Commissioner, Wellington.